FIRST THINGS

OUT OF THE RUINS
R. R. Reno

MARITAIN'S TRUE HUMANISM
Richard Francis Crane

THE BAD DIVORCE
Elizabeth Marquardt

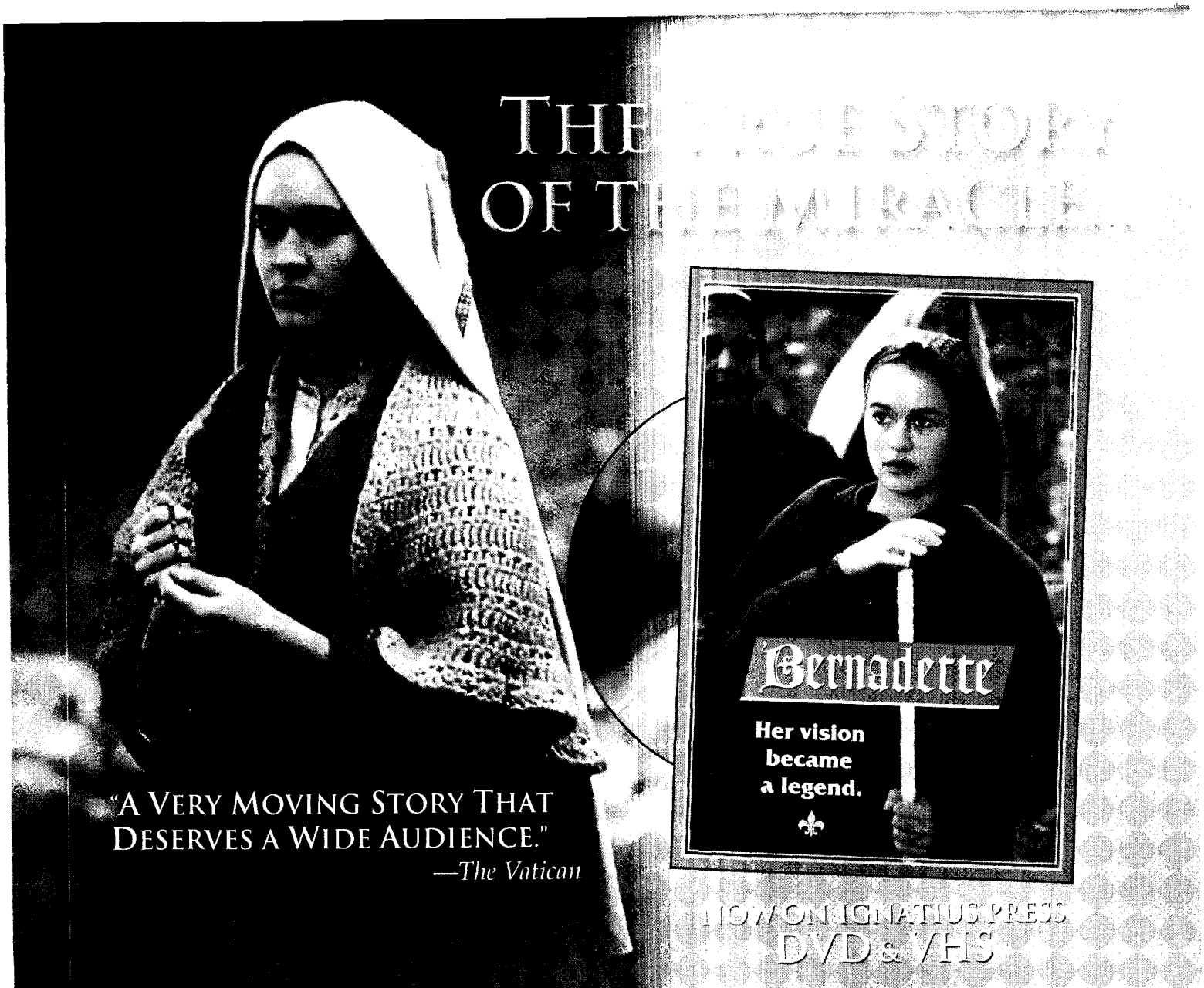
SANTAYANA LATELY REVISITED
Richard John Neuhaus

Patrick Lee & Robert P. George *Dualistic Delusions*
Shalom Carmy *Orthodoxy and Reticence*
BOOKS: *Mark L. Movsesian • Jean Bethke Elshtain*
Mary Ann Glendon • David B. Hart • Lawrence A. Uzzell

THE PUBLIC SQUARE ***Richard John Neuhaus***
IN THIS ISSUE: ***Why the Jews Rejected Jesus***

February 2005 • Number 150 • $4.25/$5.25 Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"A VERY MOVING STORY THAT DESERVES A WIDE AUDIENCE."
—*The Vatican*

NOW ON IGNATIUS PRESS DVD & VHS

LEARN MORE AT
WWW.BERNADETTEMOVIE.COM

FROM JEAN DELANNOY, one of France's foremost filmmakers, comes this top quality feature film production of the story of St. Bernadette and the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes. Actress Sydney Penny gives a beautiful performance as Bernadette, and the rest of the cast is equally superb. Also starring Roland Lesaffre and Michele Simonnet.

Bernadette is highly recommended by the Vatican as a "sensitive portrayal of a very moving story that deserves a wide audience." Shot on location in France with outstanding cinematography and a beautiful music score, this is the film that was chosen to be shown daily at the shrine in Lourdes. **120 minutes, Color.**

DVD INCLUDES OPTIONAL SPANISH SUBTITLES

VHS $24.95 DVD $29.95

ignatius press

P.O. BOX 1339, FORT COLLINS, CO 80522
1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

February 2005 • Number 150

Correspondence

2 The science of climate change; transsexual truths?

Opinion

Patrick Lee & Robert P. George 5 Dualistic Delusions

Shalom Carmy 8 Orthodoxy and Reticence

Articles

R. R. Reno 11 Out of the Ruins

Richard Francis Crane 17 Maritain's True Humanism

Elizabeth Marquardt 24 The Bad Divorce

Richard John Neuhaus 28 Santayana Lately Revisited

Books

Mark L. Movsesian 34 Snow by Orhan Pamuk

Jean Bethke Elshtain 38 American Providence by Stephen H. Webb

Mary Ann Glendon 41 I Am Charlotte Simmons by Tom Wolfe

David B. Hart 44 Orlando Innamorato by Matteo Maria Boiardo

Lawrence A. Uzzell 48 The Universal Hunger for Liberty by Michael Novak

52 Briefly Noted

The Public Square

Richard John Neuhaus 58 Why the Jews Rejected Jesus, *etc.*

Poetry

Jim Hayes (4), *Miguel Hernandez, translated by Rhina P. Espaillat* (23), *David Anthony* (27)

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** 1-877-905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846.

Copyright © 2005 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *Damon Linker*
Associate Editor: *J. A. Gray*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Boudway*
Editorial Assistant: *Erik Ross*
Poetry Editor: *Joseph Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Timothy George
Mary Ann Glendon
Wilfred M. McClay
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

CORRESPONDENCE

Science and Climate Change

I am writing to express my disappointment with Thomas Sieger Derr's "Strange Science" (November 2004). While I agree with Professor Derr that the science on global warming is uncertain, the conclusions he draws from the data are irresponsible. Prof. Derr argues that America was right to opt out of the Kyoto protocol because it would have harmed the economy without improving the environment. While that position is defensible, Prof. Derr's failure to say anything more is not. As Christians we are supposed to be stewards of the earth. Prof. Derr proposes no meaningful alternative to Kyoto and no vision of what a Christian environmentalism might mean. Prof. Derr seems to think that there is no reason to be alarmed about the volume of pollutants we are emitting, and he blames arrogant academics, the UN, and the media for exaggerating our environmental problems. Even if one accepts his arguments, I think it reasonable to say that the excesses of our consumerist society are harming us both spiritually and environmentally and that something about our lifestyles needs to change.

Brendan Wilson
Washington D.C.

Thomas Sieger Derr has pricked a festering blister within the academic and political communities. I suspect that the reaction will be harsh from those scientists whose reputations have been built upon doomsday predictions. The weight of the evidence, however, is entirely on the side of Professor Derr and his argument.

The "greenhouse effect" is a model for explaining climate change. Like all models, it makes testable predictions. One prediction is that the planet will warm in proportion to an increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere. As Prof. Derr observes, the evidence only superficially supports this prediction. He does not add, as he could have, that the margin of error involved in measuring temperature change is larger than the observed change, a fact that casts doubt upon the reality of any observed increase or decrease in temperature.

Another prediction of the greenhouse model is that temperature increases will be greatest at elevations closest to sea level and will diminish at higher elevations. This prediction is based upon the greater density of the atmosphere, as well as the higher concentration of carbon dioxide and water vapor, at lower elevations. But no such correlation has been observed.

Scarce public resources should be devoted to solving problems that the evidence suggests are real. The greenhouse effect does not seem to be one of those problems. Perhaps, as Prof. Derr suggests, the greenhouse theory lives on because of the threat honesty would pose to the reputations and fundraising power tied to it.

Benjamin F. Lasseter
Indianapolis, Indiana

As someone who works on understanding the earth's ecosystem for a living, I am often put off by irresponsible claims about the effects of global warming. Nevertheless, it bothers me to see Thomas Sieger Derr repeat two persistent myths of the global warming skeptics' camp, one of which is simply false, the other of which is self-refuting.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first myth is that "there is not a very good correlation between atmospheric carbon dioxide and past climate changes." This statement is true over the relatively recent period since the end of the last glaciation. Yet when viewed over a longer period, say the last 700,000 years, the correlation is actually extraordinarily good, as confirmed by ice core records taken by the Vostok Project and the European Project for Ice Coring in Antarctica (EPICA). Higher carbon dioxide levels are the leading hypothesis invoked to explain higher temperatures during the Cretaceous period, to resolve the "faint young sun" paradox (i.e., to explain why the earth did not freeze over in earlier times when the sun was not as bright), and to explain the emergence of the earth from global glaciation during the Neoproterozoic period. For many climate scientists, myself included, these correlations, rather than the output of climate models, represent the best calibration of the potential impact of global warming. The calibration that emerges, while not catastrophic, is significant.

Professor Derr's second mistake is to claim that "the likeliest cause of climate trends seems to be solar variability." The actual change in solar radiation associated with known variability is much smaller than the change in the atmosphere's ability to trap radiation associated with carbon dioxide. Proponents of the solar variability hypothesis must come up with an amplifier for solar forcing that does not serve as an amplifier for greenhouse gas forcing. This they have failed to do. Thus, while certain models are able to attribute warming during the first part of the twentieth century to solar variability, those same models also predict a significant response to greenhouse gas forcing.

As a responsible scientist I am limited to what our best understanding, embodied in models of climate, actually shows. What it shows is global warming resulting from carbon dioxide emissions. While the hysterical rhetoric of many environmental groups is of little use, it is equally useless to refuse to admit that the best available science may have something to say about the relative merits of a given plan of action.

Anand Gnanadesikan
Plainsboro, New Jersey

Thomas Sieger Derr replies:
I thank Benjamin F. Lasseter for his support and for his additions to my argument.

Brendan Wilson wants me to say more, or perhaps to have written a different article. Actually, I have been for years a strong defender of environmental stewardship—from the perspective of Christian humanism. I certainly believe in restricting atmospheric pollutants—as indeed my article says, in so many words. So we ought not to have any disagreement there. But my essay was about something else.

There is, not surprisingly, considerable disagreement on the causes of the fluctuations in the earth's temperature over centuries and millennia, and Anand Gnanadesikan's letter reflects that. I have been more impressed than he is by papers that argue for a solar hypothesis. Such research argues that the geological record shows essentially no correlation between carbon dioxide levels and temperature change for the last half-billion years, even though those levels have at times been eighteen times higher than they are today. Changes in earth temperature correspond, instead, to solar and galactic movement. The question of whether or not this is true is fodder for future scientific discussion. But in any case Dr. Gnanadesikan's letter does not affect my main point—namely, that variations in earth's temperature are naturally occurring and do not correlate with human activity.

Transsexual Truths?

In "Surgical Sex" (November 2004) Paul McHugh is certainly right to assert that sexual identity (or, as I prefer, gender) is not subject to change; it is most certainly inherent. About nearly everything else, however, Dr. McHugh is quite wrong. To begin with, I honestly have to wonder how many transsexuals Dr. McHugh has encountered, either before or after surgery. While some do match his descriptions, most of those I know have actually been quite successful in their transformation and are indistinguishable from other women.

Contrary to Dr. McHugh's claims, many transsexual women show considerable interest in children and many mourn the fact that they will never be able to bear a child. I myself have cried bitter tears over this. And yes, some transsexual women do identify as lesbian—just like women who are not transsexual. Likewise, many transsexual men identify as gay. Such is to be expected if transsexualism is more than just a choice.

The report published by Jon Meyer (and cited authoritatively by Dr. McHugh) was met with considerable skepticism at the time it was published. It was widely criticized for methodological flaws, while other studies have shown that Meyer's study was incorrect in its conclusions. Nevertheless, it was used by Johns Hopkins as an excuse to shut down its gender identity clinic. I also note that Dr. McHugh mentions the Clarke Institute. The fact is that this agency has a notorious reputation for mistreating transsexual patients, forcing them to meet unreasonable standards, and denying them the hormones needed to modify their bodies.

One wonders why Dr. McHugh would choose such a cruel approach to the treatment of transsexuals. Sex-reassignment surgery has proven to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be the only successful treatment for these patients, and yet for some reason he wishes to deny this. He makes a rather clumsy attempt to justify his position by comparing the treatment of adults who are transsexual with the treatment of children who are intersexed. Ironically, the arguments for one contradict the arguments for the other. Children who are intersexed have traditionally been surgically altered in whatever manner is simplest. This has often resulted in a child who has a male brain being given a female body. As Dr. McHugh points out, such a child is tormented by the attempt to force him to live at odds with his natural inclinations. And yet, he cannot find the compassion to provide treatment to those who, for whatever reason, were born male but whose brains were not sexualized as male in the womb. Even though both groups face the same set of problems, Dr. McHugh sets out to protect one group while effectively punishing the other.

Jennifer Usher
San Francisco, California

Correction

On the table-of-contents page of the January issue, the author of the poem printed on page 31 ("Bearing Up") was incorrectly given as Oliver Thomas. The author's name is in fact Oliver Murray. We regret the error.

Serenading the Neighbors

Little Albert has a way
of driving all the neighbors mad—
a trait, his mother likes to say,
that he borrowed from his Dad.

Let the moon rise late or early,
Albert's little voice will trill
as he plays his ukulele
underneath the window sill.

When Dad gets up to sing along,
their voices piercing through the air,
the neighbors know there's something wrong
and fall down on their knees in prayer.

Mother says they're being spiteful
barely holding back her tears,
and thinks Dad's voice is quite delightful
for someone who's been dead for years.

Jim Hayes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Dualistic Delusions

Patrick Lee & Robert P. George

Disputes about metaphysical issues rarely make the newspapers. The ancient argument about the nature and identity of the human person, however, turns out to be highly relevant to issues that contemporary Americans read about, and argue about, every day. As Yale psychology professor Paul Bloom recently observed in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, "What people think about . . . gay marriage, stem-cell research, and the role of religion in public life . . . is intimately related to their views on human nature."

Consider, for example, the abortion issue. Many defenders of abortion implicitly suppose that a human person is a consciousness or series of conscious acts that has or inhabits a body, and so they hold that your human organism came to be at one time but that *you* came to be at another time (say, with the emergence of your self-consciousness). But if they are wrong, if instead a human person is a human physical organism, then the person came to be whenever this physical organism came to be. Similarly, if the human person is a bodily entity, then it makes no sense to regard the body as a mere extrinsic tool which we may legitimately use simply for the sake of obtaining desirable effects in our consciousness (which is regarded by people who accept dualism as the "true" person that inhabits, or is somehow "associated with," the body)—a view widely held by defenders of sexual liberalism and same-sex "marriage" in particular.

And yet it is often the proponents of traditional morality who are accused of holding a body-self dualism. For example, advocates of abortion often assume that defenders of prenatal human life maintain their position on purely religious grounds, believing on faith that the soul is present from conception onward. Abortion advocates then say that "souls" cannot be shown to exist, assert that this is backed up by science, and then smugly conclude that science is on their side against religious zealots who believe in an unprovable and mysterious soul.

In fact, intelligent pro-lifers do not first inquire whether the soul is present and from that inquiry conclude that there is or is not a human being present. Rather, they understand that it makes more sense to begin by asking whether there are characteristics—physical characteristics—which indicate the presence of a human being, however small and developmentally immature he or she is; it is on the basis of the answer to that question that one can conclude that the human soul must be present. It is actually defenders of abortion who often implicitly assume body-self dualism, even though at other times in the debate they deny or disparage the idea of a soul and embrace or postulate materialism. We will show below that neither body-self dualism nor materialism is sound, that a third possibility represents an intellectually superior view of what a human person is, and that this view is key for understanding many of the great ethical controversies of the day.

An almost pure case of the oscillation between dualism and materialism occurs in Paul Bloom's op-ed piece. Professor Bloom begins his article by rightly noting that dualism is both widespread and mistaken. He then further states correctly that the question of when human life begins is colored by one's view of what a human being is. This, he says, is why people often appeal to science to answer the question, "When does human life begin?" But this question, Bloom contends, is not really about life in the biological sense, but about "the magical moment at which a cluster of cells becomes more than a mere physical thing. It is a question about the soul." Bloom then says that science cannot answer that question because science has in fact demonstrated that "the qualities of mental life we associate with souls are purely corporeal; they emerge from biochemical processes in the brain." According to Bloom, "This is starkly demonstrated in cases in which damage to the brain wipes out capacities as central to our humanity as memory, self-control, and decision-making."

But here Bloom is gravely mistaken. First, his "stark demonstration" is no demonstration at all; it rests on what is manifestly a non sequitur. Shutting off action X prevents action Y: this shows either that X is identical with Y, or that, though X and Y are distinct, Y depends on X to occur. Severe brain damage prevents conceptual thought and decision-making—this much the medieval Christian philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas recognized centuries ago, and Aristotle centuries before that. But their view was that conceptual thought and decision-making in human beings depends on brain operations (to provide sense experience), even though (for different reasons) they also held that conceptual thought and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

free choice are distinct and nonbodily operations. Thus, Bloom has presented no compelling argument at all for his materialism or for the "great conflict between science and religion" that he claims to exist on the question of human nature.

Second, *pace* Bloom, if science did show that all human acts, including conceptual thought and free choice, are just brain processes, then science would provide answers to important moral questions. It would just provide answers different from those we have traditionally accepted. In particular, it would mean that the difference between human beings and other animals is only superficial—a difference of degree rather than a difference in kind; it would mean that human beings lack any special dignity worthy of special respect. Thus, it would undermine the norms that forbid killing and eating human beings as we kill and eat chickens, or enslaving them and treating them as beasts of burden as we do horses or oxen.

In fact, however, the empirical sciences themselves have nothing to say one way or the other about whether there is an aspect of human beings—such as the source of conceptual thought and free choice—that is not simply a material process or a by-product of material processes. And given the limitations of their methods, the empirical sciences have nothing directly to say about an intrinsic human dignity and what the basis of that intrinsic dignity might be. So there is no "great conflict" between religion and science with respect to psychology; this "conflict" is a fiction invented by scientists unwarily wandering into the domain of philosophy. Of course, there are philosophers who defend materialism and who argue intelligently with their fellow philosophers who reject it; but the argument by which Bloom purports to demonstrate materialism is worthless.

Bloom's reasoning here exemplifies a common confusion. Defenders of abortion and euthanasia often oscillate between body-self dualism and unscientific materialism, depending on which one will further a given line of argument. For example, faced with evidence showing that the life of a human individual begins at conception, they deny that embryonic humans are persons or selves, implicitly identifying "persons" with consciousnesses. But, later in the debate, accused of drawing the line between persons and nonpersons in an arbitrary way, they then claim that such line-drawing must be arbitrary since we are all just aggregates or concatenations of material particles. One moment they claim that we are consciousnesses that use our bodies; the next moment they say we are purely material, different only in degree from other material entities.

Bloom contends that because science has established materialism, it is therefore unable to answer the question, "When does human life begin?" But the premise is untrue and the argument invalid. Science does not establish materialism, and even if it did, this would not preclude it from answering the question of when human life begins. Actually, the opposite of this argument is closer to the truth: if body-self dualism were true, then science could not answer that question. Bloom's mistake here is the common one of supposing that the idea that life begins at conception (in a way that can settle debates over abortion and embryo-destructive experimentation) is somehow tied to the idea that there must be a "magical moment" when a soulless body becomes ensouled: "There is no moment at which a soulless body becomes an ensouled one and *so* scientific research cannot provide objective answers to the questions that matter most to us" (emphasis added). This is confused. It is true that (empirical) science cannot by itself settle the whole ethical issue concerning the moral worth of embryonic and fetal human life. But if it is true that every distinct, human individual has intrinsic dignity (a proposition that most Americans hold, and one for which we have offered philosophical arguments in other writings), then science, and in particular embryology, can answer an important question—namely, when does a distinct human individual come to be?

And the answer provided unanimously by the leading texts in embryology is quite clear. As one text puts it: "Human development begins at fertilization when a male gamete or sperm (spermatozoon) unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell—a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual" (Keith L. Moore and T. V. N. Persaud, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, 5th edition; see also William J. Larsen, *Essentials of Human Embryology*; Scott F. Gilbert, *Developmental Biology*, 7th edition; and Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Muller, *Human Embryology and Teratology*, 3rd edition).

Ironically, Bloom (like many others) seems to be misled on this by an implicit consciousness-body dualism. He evidently holds that nothing is intrinsically valuable (as a subject of rights) without a functioning mind. And because he supposes that science has shown that the mind is material and develops gradually, having emerged more generally by evolution, he concludes that it cannot be determined with certainty and precision when this intrinsically valuable entity is present and when it isn't.

However, contrary to this view, what is intrinsical-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly valuable is not the mental functions or qualities we have, but the being, the substantial entity, that you and I are. (By "substantial entity" we mean the thing that one is rather than the characteristics or properties one possesses.) You and I are intrinsically valuable and equal in fundamental worth and dignity because of what we are, not because of qualities we may (if all goes well) acquire at some point during our lives—qualities that come and go, and which some human beings possess in greater degree than others. And so we are intrinsically valuable in a way that makes us possessors of dignity and bearers of rights from the point at which we come to be, and we remain possessors of dignity and bearers of rights until we die.

Since dualism is mistaken—since we are not consciousnesses inhabiting bodies but are physical organisms possessing from the beginning a human (i.e., rational) nature—it follows that we came to be when these physical organisms came to be. And the science of embryology does determine when that occurs—namely, conception. Bloom uses materialism to rule out the possibility that one could draw the line between persons (beings with full moral worth) and mere things in an objective and nonarbitrary way; but he implicitly adopts the very body-self dualism he criticizes when he assumes that there is something intrinsically valuable in human beings only when actual mental functions or states are present.

Like many others, Bloom seems to have rushed to an acceptance of materialism because he erroneously supposes that if dualism is false then materialism must be true. It is widely assumed that dualism and materialism exhaust the alternatives: either we are souls which possess or inhabit our bodies, or everything in us is completely explainable by matter and material processes. But there is a third possibility, one that avoids the problems associated with dualism and materialism.

On the one hand, a human being is essentially a physical organism, an animal. This point is shown (though the full argument would require more space than we have here) by the fact that you and I—not any entities which we merely possess or inhabit—perform and undergo bodily actions. Sensation and perception are clearly bodily activities: they are performed with bodily organs such as the senses and parts of the brain. So the subject that does the sensing and perceiving is a bodily entity, an animal organism. But it must be the same subject, the same "I," that senses or perceives and that engages in conceptual thought (though conceptual thought is not itself a bodily action—more on this in a moment). For it must be the same subject that perceives the ink marks on a page, for example, and that understands the intelligible message signified by them.

On the other hand, conceptual thought and free choice cannot be material actions; they must be spiritual or nonmaterial actions. Conceptual thought inevitably refers to a universal feature or aspect of the object of thought (for example, what an animal is, as opposed to this or that particular animal), a feature or aspect not of itself restricted to a particular place or time. But every material action has as its object an entity that is restricted to a particular place and time. Hence there is an aspect of us, a capacity or power, which is nonmaterial. It is nonmaterial in the sense that the actions in it and its existence do not depend on matter—whereas a material aspect of a thing is intrinsically circumscribed by a particular space and a particular time.

But this immaterial aspect is not the whole self, only an aspect or part of the self. On the one hand, then, one can hold that the human being is not a soul alone, but the whole living bodily entity, a composite of body (or matter) and soul (the "form" or organizing principle of the living thing). On the other hand, there is an aspect of the human being that is nonmaterial, and could not have emerged from matter and material forces. So neither body-self dualism nor materialism is correct. We are essentially physical organisms, and so we come to be when these organisms come to be—at conception. Yet we are more than just the latest product of blind evolution, since there is an immaterial aspect of us that could not have emerged from lower material forces.

The third alternative we have outlined here is hardly an invention of ours. In one variant or another, it has been held by many of the most distinguished philosophers in history, and many hold it today. Moreover, it has been accepted by some religious traditions, including the world's largest religious body, the Catholic Church. The Church rejects both materialism and body-self dualism. The human being is not just a set of material processes; nor is it a consciousness possessing or inhabiting a body. As Aristotle recognized even in antiquity, and as many others have understood since, the human being is a rational animal—an integrated unity of body and soul.

Patrick Lee is Professor of Philosophy at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Robert P. George is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton. They are at work on a book on dualism and contemporary ethical questions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Orthodoxy and Reticence

Shalom Carmy

It has been forty years since my revered teacher Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, popularly known as "the Rav" by his followers in the modern wing of American Orthodoxy, presented his paper "Confrontation" to the Rabbinical Council of America. The paper was later published in the Council's intellectual journal, *Tradition*. Together with subsequent guidelines, the principles advanced in this essay have governed Orthodox Judaism's policy regarding "dialogue" with other religions, most notably the Roman Catholic Church. The essay's fortieth anniversary is a good time to think again about the Rav's position and how it might provide guidance for us today.

The practical conclusion of "Confrontation" is easily summarized: Jews must work together with representatives of the "religion of the many" when it comes to ethics and public policy. Moreover, "religious values, doctrines, and concepts may be and have been translated into cultural categories enjoyed and cherished even by secular man." But unlike these "cultural" manifestations of religion, the divine imperatives that characterize a faith community are incommensurate, particularistic, and incommunicable: "dialogue" with respect to such doctrines as the election of Israel, the eternal authority of the Torah, the Trinity, and the incarnation, is ill-advised and futile. Just as it is illegitimate for Jews to tailor their convictions to the expectations of the majority community, it is likewise "impertinent and unwise" for the community of the few to advise or solicit corresponding changes on the part of the "community of the many."

"Confrontation" has been the subject of more polemical revisionism than any other single essay by Rabbi Soloveitchik. Some project onto the Rav's conclusions their own unease with the Christian contribution to human spiritual culture. Others say that Jewish concerns about dialogue are no longer justified because Christianity is no longer supersessionist. They argue, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the Rav changed his mind—or *would* have changed his mind had he kept up with developments.

Nobody familiar with the full range of the Rav's published writings and lectures can deny that he found Christian thought helpful in working out and communicating his own ideas. It is simply impossible to follow him without considering his appreciation and critique of Kierkegaard, Otto, Scheler, Newman, Barth, Brunner, and Niebuhr, among others. He differed from other contemporary rabbinic authorities not only in the breadth and depth of his intellectual life, but also in his willingness to reveal his interests to the public. It is thus impossible to take his positive words about Christian cultural and intellectual creativity as mere politeness.

In a Boston College website symposium last year, I denied that developments in the Roman Catholic Church, or any other church, have superseded my teacher's ruling. Formal dialogue, in which authorized representatives of faith communities present their official positions, has never attracted me. Yet for as long as I have been an Orthodox Jew, I have recognized the importance of Christian thought for my own intellectual growth. For better or for worse, Western culture has played a part in making me who I am. The vigorous pursuit of self-knowledge eventually led me to become acquainted with my Christian counterparts: I enjoy and value these opportunities. The encounters of which I speak are academic, not ecclesiastic. The goal is not to produce position papers but to enhance understanding. At the same time, the relationship is not one of dry scholarship: what my Christian colleagues and I are after is not information but wisdom. And the life of wisdom is intertwined with the passion of commitment.

In the intellectual context, the line between discussion of social and ethical matters and "theology" is not always easily drawn. Take an (oversimplified) example: Christianity insists that one offer forgiveness even to those who have not repented of their transgressions; Judaism makes no such demand. Few questions have greater import for personal, social, and political ethics. If Jews and Christians can talk about anything beyond nuts-and-bolts political cooperation, they should be able to talk about this. Given the large cultural and psychological dimensions of forgiveness and revenge, these should be areas where both sides can learn. Precisely because of its moral implications, this subject lays bare the most intimate religious passions of Christian and Jew. Unless one bleaches the debate of its living doctrinal substance—and the Rav explicitly states that requiring men of faith to bracket their deepest experiences constitutes unacceptable censorship—it inevitably raises questions about atonement, justification, faith and works, and so on. To discuss these matters with honesty, without compromising one's own convictions or bullying or taking refuge in empty generalities, demands great sophistication and tact. Thorny metaphysical issues concerning the Trinity are mere logic-chopping by comparison.

Despite the differences between formal dialogue and discussion, Soloveitchik's reasoning about the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

former—particularly his emphasis on the privacy and intimacy of the faith experience—deepens our appreciation of the latter. His reservations about dialogue suggest an approach that is essential to the kind of individual intellectual and ethical discussion that is important to me. His outlook has affected the way I face the "community of the many," and it has helped define my attitude toward the cultural challenges confronting my own Jewish community. Recognizing the limitations of formal dialogue highlights the virtues of discussion.

The Rav vividly perceived and articulated the intimacy between God and the individual, and between God and His people. Most attempts to communicate to an outsider the secret life of Torah—its study and fulfillment—involve distortion and objectification. It is as difficult and as dangerous as trying to "dialogue" explicitly with friends and acquaintances about one's most intimate family relations. The unique gestures and turns of phrase that an outsider is liable to dismiss as insignificant are often loaded with a meaning that defies paraphrase and explanation. Modesty is not only a matter of external garb. It is a reticence about exposing human and communal singularity. Though some may find it ironic that the Rav borrowed the language of Kierkegaard and Barth, his formulations are rooted in the traditional halakhic conception of Torah as part of a sacred covenant between God and Israel—a covenant for which the conjugal image is a suitable metaphor. The Rav would probably have liked Auden's line: "Orthodoxy is reticence."

All of this may sound absurd to those for whom the theological singularity of Jewish existence and Torah is an intellectual formula rather than a vivid, pervasive experience; and this kind of modesty is alien to a compulsively talkative culture that sees reticence as an obstacle to be overcome. Clearly there are occasions when it is vulgar and degrading to speak of private matters to outsiders. Yet even modest people sometimes allow friends and acquaintances some measure of access to their intimate lives. Such attempts at communication, however inadequate, are often dignified and useful. The fully "orthodox," who have internalized the Rav's attitude to Torah and Jewish singularity and share Auden's esteem for reticence, may already have a sense of how to strike a balance between communication and modesty. Policy, however, requires general guidelines. Though no rigid set of rules can prescribe the appropriate behavior and nuance for every case, the Rav undertook to provide certain general principles.

Of course, Jewish-Christian dialogue is more problematic than the personal analogy with which I began. When I speak to my neighbor, I meet another individual; but while a Jew may develop significant friendships with his or her Christian counterparts, official dialogue is a transaction between organizations. Though the most productive moments of dialogue may take place in private, the ostensible framework of dialogue is that of public discourse measured by results, joint statements, and so forth. In that case the ultimate goals of the participants are incompatible. The most tolerant Christian, for instance, firmly believes that I would be a lot better off if I accepted the divinity of Jesus; the most tolerant Jew firmly rejects the idea of a human being who is divine. As Francis Cardinal Arinze explains in his *Meeting Other Believers: The Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue*, the fact that dialogue must be kept separate from propaganda or missionary activity does not invalidate the latter. This introduces a pressure not common in ordinary neighborly relations.

Lastly, the hatred and contempt of the past two millennia add a formidable barrier to authentic communication. Despite the best intentions, one is tempted to bargain for a more advantageous position, to make or demand concessions, to wheedle and to coax, to impose one's agenda and vocabulary. We all hope and pray that the improved atmosphere of our generation is permanent. But we academicians tend to focus too much on the Christian circles that have proven congenial, ignoring those that are hostile or indifferent. Nor can one overlook the fact that the conditions making for present amity may not persist.

Currently, traditional Christians and Jews share a mutual fear of the menace posed by secularism. If the secularist danger abated (a major goal of the dialogues and discussions between Orthodox Jews and Christians), that motive would weaken. Consciousness of the Holocaust as a religious catastrophe has affected the attitudes of veteran Christian theologians. There is no guarantee that younger generations will respond in the same manner. When Soloveitchik was writing forty years ago, few would have predicted the hostility to Israel now noticeable in liberal mainline Protestant churches, just as few anticipated the collapse of communism. My personal experience encourages optimism. The twentieth century, however, was exceptionally hard on prophets of inevitable progress in human relations.

My experience also suggests that the mystery and intimacy inherent to the "orthodox" Jewish mentality is not alien to the classical Christians I know and whose works I study. Hence it is not surprising that my most committed students at Yeshiva University are able to benefit from members of the "community of the many" who influenced their teachers, and they are eager to debate contemporary figures such as Avery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cardinal Dulles, George Lindbeck, Stanley Hauerwas, and John Milbank.

More liberal Jews—and I include here many who take the practice of their religion seriously—gladly "dialogue" with secularism even as they decline to acknowledge cultural common ground with their Christian brethren. Though usually ascribed to the legacy of persecution, this indifference to, and ignorance of, Christianity is part of the American academy's tendency to marginalize religion and deprecate religion's intellectual resources. To treat religion and its cognitive demands with respect is to confront the very difficulties the Rav addressed in "Confrontation" and elsewhere. The intractable conflict of incommensurable ideals and beliefs—a conflict that cannot be resolved by invoking neutral, universal secular standards—engenders discomfort and loneliness. Taking Jewish theological distinctiveness seriously is perceived by many as an obstacle to integration in American life; going along with secularism is not perceived as harmful. Many Jews have decided that the solution is to downplay or oppose the positive contribution of Christianity in American life and, correspondingly, to reduce halakhic Judaism to behavior devoid of distinctive intellectual commitment.

Some years ago, after a lecture I gave at an Ivy League university, an Orthodox student told me that she had wanted to major in philosophy but switched to psychology upon discovering that the philosophy department was populated by Christians. I asked her whether the psychology professors were aligned with Orthodox teachings on free will, sexuality, and other controversial matters. She fell silent and admitted that nobody had ever raised that question before. It was hard not to contrast this exchange with the conduct of my revered teacher Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, the Rav's son-in-law and primary disciple, who chose to write his doctoral dissertation under a scholar who unabashedly upheld the ideals of Christian humanism. I also recall the story I heard from another of the Rav's loyal students, Rabbi Walter Wurzburger. When officers of the Rabbinical Council of America balked at participating in a Catholic-sponsored conference on "Man as the Image of God," on the grounds that this was "theology," the Rav wryly remarked that a conference on "Man as a Purely Naturalistic Being" would not have set off the same alarms.

The naked public square and the antireligious academic arena are incompatible with passionate commitment and intellectual self-respect on the part of religious Jews. Like the Marranos of early modern Spain, who publicly converted to Christianity and practiced Judaism only in private, too many Jews today engage in a policy of passive accommodation to the dominant intellectual culture of liberal secularism. The more thoroughly we recognize the mystery and incommunicability of Jewish distinctiveness, the more evident are the reasons not to do so. Jews who wish to engage in creative confrontation with the giants of Western thought can do so within the frame of reference developed for us by the Rav, and they can do it in his spirit of humility, courage, and reticence. Such engagement may increase the likelihood that when we find ourselves side by side with similarly oriented members of the "community of the many," we will do one another some good.

Shalom Carmy is Chair of the Department of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva College of Yeshiva University in New York. He is also the editor of Tradition.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Out of the Ruins

R. R. Reno

On a Saturday in mid-September of last year, the feast day of St. Robert Bellarmine, I was received into the Catholic Church. I pledged to believe and profess all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. The priest anointed me with the oil of confirmation. I exchanged the sign of peace with gathered friends and, after long months of preparation, I received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Martyrs' Chapel of St. John's Church on the Creighton University campus was not where I had expected to be on that day. Three years before, I had written *In the Ruins of the Church*, which was a kind of manifesto against such a move from Canterbury to Rome. That book diagnosed the pathologies of my former denomination, acknowledging that it had become a smugly self-satisfied member of the liberal Protestant club. Yet I argued with equal vigor that Episcopalians should stay put and endure the diminishments of Christianity in our time. I claimed that the disordered state of the Episcopal Church had not led me to despair. I criticized the habits of evasion and strategies of escape that seemed to promise refuge in some other church, and I proposed instead the vocation of dwelling amidst the ruins.

Publication creates accountability. Hearing of my departure from the Episcopal Church, a close friend wrote a strongly worded letter reminding me of my arguments for staying put. He cited my own words against me. "I reject our desire for a liberating distance," I had written. "Our vocation is to dwell within the ruins of the Church," I had said. And again, "We need to see that in Christ we are not called to love strength and power and beauty. Ruins are not unfit for human habitation."

These words, my friend reminded me, had been read and remembered; they had led people to accept ordination or undertake new responsibilities in the Episcopal Church and in other decaying mainline denominations. Moreover, these ordination vows and new responsibilities naturally created bonds of obligation that now stood in the way of precisely the move I had made. What, my friend wanted to know, had changed since I wrote *In the Ruins of the Church*? Why did I opt for departure rather than staying put? Do I now think that those who continue to fight for orthodoxy in mainline Protestantism are on a fool's errand?

His questions were difficult. What had changed? A few days after my reception into the Catholic Church, a colleague at Creighton who knows my attraction to dogmatic hyperbole took particular pleasure in observing, "My, my, you look ontologically different." Kidding aside, he was certainly right on one level. I have changed. I once tried to forge a vocation of faithfulness as a loyal member of a liberal Protestant denomination. Now I am a member of the Catholic Church. I changed—I *made* a change. I do not think I changed my mind about theology or ecclesiology or the fate of Christianity in the modern world. I suppose that, in the end, I changed my mind about myself. All the major premises of my argument stayed the same, but the minor premises changed, and with them the conclusion.

To a great extent, I would like to think my arguments for staying put were Augustinian. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine tells the tale of his search for God. As a young man he went to Carthage much as young men and women go off to college in our time. He tells

R. R. Reno *teaches theology at Creighton University and is the author of* In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity *(Brazos).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his lustful desires, his "filth of concupiscence" and "excessive vanity," but he seems to have been the kind of student most professors would love to have. In what we might call his freshman year, he read Cicero's celebration of philosophy, and the effect was immediate. "I longed," he recalls, "for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardor in my heart."

When I read the *Confessions* in my own freshman year, I assumed that this great awakening marked the beginning of St. Augustine's spiritual journey. Of course, there were many byways and dead-ends. He fell in with the Manicheans. Worldly ambition and sexual desire deflected him from the true path. Nonetheless, I was convinced that the journey began with a conversion to the love of wisdom; for me, the *Confessions* was about how Augustine had patiently followed the difficult path toward the true answer to the perennial religious question.

We tend to see what we want to see in the books we read. Our culture is one of leave-taking and it champions the seeker as the hero of the spiritual life. We think that we must brave arid deserts and snowy mountain passes on our quest for God. Recall Kierkegaard's leap of faith, William James' will to believe, and Paul Tillich's courage to be. Having read Sartre's hot rhetoric of existential choice and Heidegger's cooler image of the heroic modern man patiently walking the meadows of our disenchanted culture as a shepherd of Being, I came to believe that truth and holiness, like elves and unicorns, had been veiled and hidden in distant realms and secret forests. It was our vocation to energize our souls and get on with the search. Or so I imagined.

After many rereadings of the *Confessions,* I have been mortified to discover that St. Augustine does not commend the great preoccupation of modern Christianity, the quest for faith. For him, the journey of his young adulthood was a futile circular movement. Imagining himself to be a seeker after God, he was in fact ever returning to himself. What began as a projected heroic journey ended in exhausted despair. Ten years after Cicero had ignited in him a love of wisdom, St. Augustine reports, "I had lost all hope of discovering the truth." What seemed like a journey was nothing more than the huffing and puffing of a presumptuous soul that thought it could storm the citadel of God with earnest longing and good intentions. The upshot was paralysis, and as his story unfolds, St. Augustine adverts more and more to themes of bondage ("the chain of sexual desire" and "the slavery of worldly affairs"), crushing weight and exhaustion ("the burden of the world weighed me down with a sweet drowsiness"), and the irresolvable conflict of a divided will ("the agony of hesitation"). When one reads what Augustine actually wrote rather than what one imagines he must have written, the warning is clear. What had seemed a great and noble journey—to find God!—was, says Augustine, a series of delays and postponements. He had not struggled across spiritual deserts, nor had he climbed snowy mountain passes. By his own accounting, Augustine had spun endlessly, "turning over and over again," exhausting himself on "the treadmill of habit."

When I finally got my mind around the logic of Augustine's story, I was chastened. We live in a world of spiritual confusion no less disorienting than St. Augustine's. We certainly have many Carthages hissing with cauldrons of illicit loves. Just flip through the cable channels in the evening. We have Peter Singer at Princeton, a present-day spokesman for our present-day Manicheans and their crazy rationalism. I have been to Boulder, Colorado, and visited the shops that sell Tibetan prayer flags and audio CDs that promise to teach us how to achieve wholeness. Even where I live, in Omaha, Nebraska, fully surrounded by a great sea of "red states," the bookstores are well stocked with light reading for every seeker imaginable. Can we navigate through this jungle of spiritual choices? Augustine's story is a warning. Beware launching out on a search for God, for as Augustine asks, "What am I to myself but a guide to my own self-destruction?"

The flora of the present-day cultural environment is not limited to pre- and post- and non-Christian species. First Presbyterian sits hard by Second Baptist. Saint Leo's Catholic Church is down the street from All Saints' Episcopal. River of Life Community Church has its advertisement in the Saturday paper, along with Pacific Hills Lutheran and Sunny Slope Christian and the Vineyard Church and countless others. What are we to do in this jungle of denominationalism? Are we sinful men and women equipped to embark on a project of deciding which churches are best? When church becomes a choice, will we not guide ourselves to our own self-destruction?

No doubt many will object that this is a purely negative reason for staying put; they will say it is a kind of paralysis caused by the excessively pessimistic assumption that capacities for spiritual discernment are entirely corrupted by original sin. I consider myself Augustinian, so I affirm (if that is the word) the corruption. Wherever we are—dabbling in New Age spirituality, cultivating a despairing scientific materialism, attending the local Foursquare Church—we may become acutely aware of what we are not finding, but we lack the capacity to get up and start walking in the right direction.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still, our inability is not a condemnation to stasis. There is a journey of faith for Augustine, but the guidance comes from God, not us. Far from finding God, Augustine confesses, "You pierced my heart with the arrow of your love." Indeed, the arrows had already been loosed many times, but in his agitated desire to control his own destiny, Augustine had dodged and deflected them. Only after Augustine has recognized the vanity of his own efforts does the arrow of divine love strike its mark. In the silence of the garden, God's Word finally reaches his heart. "The examples given by your servants," Augustine reports, "burnt away and destroyed my heavy sluggishness." Then and only then does his journey begin: to baptism, back to Africa, and to Hippo.

The general principle of Augustine's own self-analysis is clear, and its relevance to the temptation to embark on our own searches for God is direct—even, and perhaps especially, when that search takes us across the strange terrain of denominationalism. "The soul needs to be enlightened," he writes, "by light from outside itself."

For the great Augustinian tradition of Western Christianity, the "outsideness" of divine light has been expressed in the principle of salvation *sola gratia*, salvation by grace alone. The ever-practical St. Benedict translated this spiritual insight into the vow of stability. The sinful soul will twist and turn to elude God's grasp, and for monks, this is manifest in the all-too-human tendency to wander from place to place in an effort to find a congenial community and a sympathetic abbot. For St. Benedict, this tendency is understandable. Who wants to endure the spiritual mediocrity of a less-than-ideal monastery, and who wants to be subjected to a less than saintly abbot? Yet, as St. Benedict realized, what is humanly understandable may be spiritually disastrous. For who shall guide the monk on his spiritual journey from place to place? Whence comes the light that will enlighten the heart of the seeker? St. Augustine's warning—"What am I to myself but a guide to my own self-destruction?"—was very much on St. Benedict's mind when he made stability a key element of his rule.

But equally—or perhaps more—importantly, St. Benedict followed St. Augustine by insisting that the grace of God is real and concrete. The spiritual arrows of divine love take the form of real people, actual texts, and specific institutions, all providentially ordered by God to shape our lives. Grace comes to the monk in the unending round of daily prayer; in the ways in which living in the company of fallen men demand habits of faith, hope, and love; and in the voice of the abbot who, like the Word of God, cannot be avoided. For St. Benedict, the vow of stability, "staying put," is integral to the training of the soul. One must be still so that the divine surgeon can work his healing arts. Love is patient, and a love of God cannot be always rushing off after clanging bells and clashing cymbals—or finely appointed churches with nice lists of doctrines that one finds agreeable.

Thus, staying put would seem a fundamental spiritual discipline if we are to renounce the fantasy that we fashion our own identities as followers of Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit, not ours. Our job is to be still so that we might be fashioned by grace. T. S. Eliot, an Augustinian Anglican after my own heart, insisted upon the spiritual imperative of stillness in the *Four Quartets*.

> Descend lower, descend only
> Into the world of perpetual solitude,
> World not world, but that which is not world,
> Internal darkness, deprivation
> And destitution of all property,
> Desiccation of the world of sense,
> Evacuation of the world of fancy,
> Inoperancy of the world of spirit;
> This is the one way, and the other
> Is the same, not in movement
> But abstention from movement; while
> the world moves
> In appetency, on its metalled ways
> Of time past and time future.

I have no intention of retreating into Cistercian silence, but in my argument for staying put, for trying to be a faithful Christian in our strange times without moving about from denomination to denomination, I tried to do justice to the Benedictine application of St. Augustine's basic insight. We must resist the world's restlessness. We must abstain from its movements so that God might move in us.

And yet I have not stayed put. I left the Episcopal Church and joined the Catholic Church. Why? Partly because I realized that I had turned my Augustinianism into an idea, a theory, a theology. But this is obscure, and to explain I must digress into the thought of another apostate Anglican.

John Henry Newman has long been one of my favorite writers. His ability to combine syllogism with sentiment is remarkable, and I have always been romanced by the long, cloistral, silver-veined sentences that give my students fits when I assign him. I well recall first reading Newman's *Apologia* in Hans Frei's class on modern theology at Yale Divinity School. Frei was at his twinkle-eyed, mysterious best when he asked us just what we thought of the famous "Note on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Liberalism," in which Newman deliciously translated the anti-dogmatic spirit of the age he so disliked into eighteen pithy doctrines.

Newman was to me an accelerant. His observation (drawn from his study of the Arian controversy) that "the truth lay, not with the Via Media, but with what was called the 'extreme party'" struck me as a bracing correction to the sensible liberalism of my childhood and education. He endorsed the principle of dogma. "Religion as mere sentiment," he wrote with denunciatory directness, "is to me a dream and a mockery." He had no patience for vague fantasies of spiritual fellowship. Like Augustine, he saw no hope in seeking. The basis of the Christian life is not our longing; it is the "visible Church, with sacraments and rites which are channels of invisible grace." We cannot move through the spiritual life the way we drift through the marketplace. Dogma and the sacramental system must define and circumscribe our belief. If at the time I still retained remnants of Schleiermacher or Tillich (the heroes of my youth), after reading Newman I wished to be rid of them.

Thus, I wrote *In the Ruins of the Church* for a dual purpose. I wanted to advance Newman's criticisms of liberalism, criticisms I took to be aligned with the postliberal theologies of my graduate professors Hans Frei and George Lindbeck. Yet, precisely because I was convinced as much by Newman's catholicism as by his antiliberalism, I wanted to do so without standing at a distance from my own church. Dogma and the sacramental system are the foundation of life in God. They are his arrows of love. I had to stay put in order to avoid drifting off into the ether of mere sentiment or theory. I had to avoid making an idea or, worse, a theology the basis for my own thought and action. In the end, I failed, and I failed in a way that Newman recognized in his own *Apologia*.

Newman is excruciatingly detailed in his account of his own thinking, but for my purposes, I can simply report his conclusion: he came to think that the basic rationale for Anglicanism lacked validity. Even more strongly, he came to think that Anglicanism was a midwife for a liberalism that led to atheism. I still do not think Newman correct in the way he sets up Anglicanism, liberalism, and atheism as falling dominos, but I have come to think that the Episcopal Church is disastrously disordered and disarrayed. Here my own reasons and analysis are of no more moment than Newman's. What matters is the way one responds to the judgment that Anglicanism is in ruins.

As he looks back in his *Apologia*, Newman reports that the realization that his prior confidence in Anglicanism was mistaken did not produce an immediate conviction that he must leave. He developed a figural interpretation of his circumstances that justified staying put. "I am content," he wrote to a friend at the time, "to be with Moses in the desert, or with Elijah excommunicated from the Temple." When I wrote *In the Ruins of the Church*, I also adopted a figural strategy to make sense of my situation. I clearly saw that the apostolic inheritance bequeathed to the Episcopal Church—a liturgy more medieval than reformed, a veneration of the ancient creeds, a love of the Church Fathers, a scriptural piety that did not confuse being learned with being critical—was being dismantled by a revisionist ideology that knew no limits. But I did not see myself as a prophet who hectored at a distance. I appealed to the scriptural figure of Nehemiah's return to the ruins of Jerusalem. The gates of the Temple had been thrown down, but rather than leave in despair, we should follow Nehemiah's pattern and live in the ruins of the Church with redoubled loyalty.

Under the influence of Ephraim Radner, I placed Nehemiah's return to a destroyed Jerusalem in a larger, more comprehensive figural interpretation of our situation as late-modern Christians. In his ambitious study of the history of Western Christian theology since the Reformation, *The End of the Church*, Radner places the destiny of the Church within the passion of Christ. Like his body crucified and broken, the divided churches in the West are undergoing a paschal suffering. Thus, I thought of staying put as a form of spiritual discipline. If I followed the path of Nehemiah and drew near to the ruins of the Church, then I would be closer still to my Lord.

Figural interpretations are not intellectual propositions that can simply be judged true or false. They are attempts to make sense out of disparate data according to patterns within Scripture, and they either compel us as deep, structuring insights, or they do not. I imagined that Radner's larger figural interpretation of our vocations as modern Christians (and my Nehemiahan figure) had the power to justify and structure an orthodox loyalty to a ruined church. I would not have written *In the Ruins of the Church* had I not believed that the paschal figure of Christ really is present in the increasingly debilitated and diminished forms of apostolic Christianity that one finds in the Episcopal Church, just as Newman would not have remained an Anglican if he had not believed his own figural interpretation of his situation. The problem was not that I had failed to notice that Anglicanism was a mess. Rereading Newman, I discovered that the problem was with myself and with the way in which I had come to hold my figural interpretation.

As Newman looks back on his own figural interpretation, he uses one of his most potent swear words. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calls it "a theory" that fed a "methodistic self-contemplation." Moses in the Sinai desert may be clearly depicted within the biblical text, and it may have a powerful reality in the lives of countless Christians. One thinks of Martin Luther King's own prophetic evocation of Moses the night before his death: he sees the Promised Land but he cannot enter. But in retrospect, Newman sees that his own use of the figure had lacked reality. It was a theory, an idea, a theological construct designed to fit his circumstances. He used the figures of Moses and Elijah to comfort himself, but they did not structure his sentiments and habits. He had not been, in fact, content to remain in the desert. He could not live in excommunication.

At various points after the election and consecration of Gene Robinson (a man who divorced his wife to live with his male lover) as bishop of New Hampshire, I found that my real ability to be loyal to the Episcopal Church slowly evaporated. The indifference to apostolic tradition and constraint overwhelmed me. I may have wanted to return to the ruins of the Church with Nehemiah's devotion, but in reality I was thinking bitter thoughts as I sat in my pew. The most innocuous little divergences from the Prayer Book made me angry. The sermons of my quite faithful rector were subjected to an uncharitable scrutiny. I made caricatures of church leaders and engaged them in tiresome imaginary debates. The good people of my parish lost their individuality and were absorbed into my mental picture of "Episcopalians," people to whom I would be heroically but lovelessly loyal.

The whole point of my figural interpretation of loyalty to the fallen stones of Jerusalem was to follow Christ, who so loved our destroyed world that he died for us on the cross. He did not kick the dust off his feet and leave the earthly city that rejected him. When I wrote *In the Ruins of the Church*, that figure seemed to have a real existence for me. "Yes," I said to myself, "I must follow the way of the cross and stay put." Perhaps I was only deceiving myself then. I am not entirely sure, but I am sure that in 2003 the figure had lost its hold on my sentiments and habits. It had become, to use Newman's epithet, a theory. Nehemiah, who goes with Christ-like love to a ruined Jerusalem, may have lived on in my mind, but my spirit was overtaken by a waspish bitterness that contradicted in my life what I had tried to argue in my book.

Modern Christianity is modern precisely in its great desire to compensate for what it imagines to be the superannuation, impotence, and failures of apostolic Christianity with a new and improved idea, theory, or theology. The disaster is not the improving impulse. I certainly wish that all Christians would expect more from their teachers and leaders. The problem is the source of the desired improvement. For Newman, "theory" is a swear word because it connotes the ephemera of mental life, ephemera easily manipulated according to fantasy and convenience. Yet in my increasing disgruntlement, there I was, more loyal to my theory of staying put than to the actual place that demanded my loyalty. It was an artifact of my mind that compelled me to stay put. Unable to love the ruins of the Episcopal Church, I was forced to love my *idea* of loving the ruins. With this idea I tried to improve myself, after the fashion of a modern theologian.

Modern theology is profoundly corruptive. The light of Christ must come from outside, through the concrete reality of the Scriptures as embodied in the life of the Church. The whole point of staying put is to resist the temptation to wander in the invented world of our spiritual imaginings. St. Augustine wandered thus, and, as he reports, the motion was circular and futile. Now my real loyalty to the flesh and blood of an actual, existing church was disappearing, and I was in danger of trying to navigate by my own ideas. My situation was all the more dangerous because my ideas had the tone and tenor of good old-fashioned Augustinianism.

"I will obey my faithless abbot," I insisted to myself. "Why?" I asked. "Because my theory requires it," I replied. "But then to what am I loyal—to my theory or to what God is telling me in the strange instrument of an increasingly apostate church?" By spring of 2004 the answer was clear. I was loyal only to my theory. The words of St. Augustine haunted me: "What am I to myself but a guide to my own self-destruction?"

I cannot say whether mainline Protestantism's ongoing dalliance with apostasy prevents any particular man or woman from living in substantial loyalty to the primary instruments of divine love from within a mainline church. I have friends whose commitment to staying put is real and not theoretical. They are an inspiration to me. The faithful Episcopalian or Lutheran or Methodist who can be still and stay put out of love for the fragments of the apostolic tradition that continue to be radiant with divine love are exhibiting, I think, an enviable spiritual discipline. Moreover, the support they provide to mainline Protestantism is of incalculable value—not only to their particular communities but also to the strange and vulnerable ecosystem of American Christianity.

I had hoped to provide my friends with the support of companionship in loyalty to a ruined church, but my errand became spiritually foolish. I turned staying put into a spectral idea that took the place of a living reality. I turned it into a theory of self-appointed spiritual heroism that was neither spiritual (since it was laced with bitter anger) nor heroic (since it was notion-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

al rather than real). I perverted Ephraim Radner's scriptural figure because in the corruption of my heart I made it empty and void.

In the end, my decision to leave the Episcopal Church did not happen because I had changed my mind about any particular point of theology or ecclesiology. Nor did it represent a sudden realization that the arguments for staying put are specious. What changed was the way in which I had come to hold my ideas and use my arguments. In order to escape the insanity of my slide into self-guidance, I put myself up for reception into the Catholic Church as one might put oneself up for adoption. A man can no more guide his spiritual life by his own ideas than a child can raise himself on the strength of his native potential.

Stories of conversion to the Catholic Church can be rather tediously joyous. One might wish for some variety in such stories, perhaps something along the lines of Winston Churchill's observation that "democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." But such variety as there is in conversion stories would seem to rest on the different ways in which converts describe a newly found bounty. For me, the gain was fairly simple.

The Catholic Church did not deliver me from apostasy and false teaching. I teach at a Jesuit University, so I am not naïve about just how insouciant about orthodoxy priests can be. Nor did Catholicism provide me with a neat, efficient, and trouble-free church. I do read newspapers. What my reception into the Catholic Church provided was deliverance from the temptation to navigate by the compass of a theory. The Catholic Church has countless failures, but of this I am certain: Catholic Christianity does not need to be underwritten by an idea.

A Pentecostal friend came to the Mass of reception at the Jesuit Martyrs' Chapel. He is a close friend and a man whose faith I admire. After the Mass we talked for a while. He asked me, "So, what did it feel like to become a Catholic?" I told him, "It felt like being submerged into the ocean." He reacted with a look of thinly disguised horror. That look reminded me that, while I sometimes suffer from an attraction to Emersonian fantasies of self-reliance and disdain for hierarchy, I have never wanted to be alone with God. It has always seemed to me that such a desire too easily turns into a longing to be alone with one's idea of God, and that is the same as being alone with oneself.

The ocean needs no justification. It needs no theory to support the movement of its tides. In the end, as an Episcopalian I needed a theory to stay put, and I came to realize that a theory is a thin thread easily broken. The Catholic Church needs no theories. She is the mother of theologies; she does not need to be propped up by theologies. As Newman put it in one of his Anglican essays, "the Church of Rome preoccupies the ground." She is a given, a primary substance within the economy of denominationalism. One could rightly say that I became a Catholic by default, and that possibility is the simple gift I received from the Catholic Church. *Mater ecclesia*, she needed neither reasons, nor theories, nor ideas from me. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maritain's True Humanism

Richard Francis Crane

In the course of his long life, French philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) adopted a series of different political positions while remaining consistent in his philosophical theology. What is one to do with an intellectual whose political engagement ranged from an early flirtation with the authoritarian Action Française to a leading role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and who both helped to inspire the Second Vatican Council and caustically catalogued its allegedly pernicious cultural side effects? Ralph McInerny offers an image of a saintly savant almost bereft of practical wisdom: "He careened from right to left and back again; his gyroscope only worked when he was in his study or on his knees." I would like to provide another interpretation.

Maritain's conception of history demands our attention now more than ever, anticipating by a half century Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of why the Enlightenment project had to fail, and suggesting the possibility of a Christian renewal of civilization. In Maritain's major writings from the 1920s through the 1960s, from *Antimoderne* (1922) to *The Peasant of the Garonne* (1966), he continually confronts the atomized individualism of modernity with its attendant neglect or outright denial of claims of truth. And against a prevailing tendency to envision human progress *without* God, he emphasizes both the philosophical heritage of natural law—drawing above all on the thought of Thomas Aquinas—and the theological centrality of the incarnation, describing the nature and destiny of the human person as "the conquest of a freedom consonant with the vocation of our nature."

RICHARD FRANCIS CRANE *is Professor of History at Greensboro College.*

However nuanced and tempered with optimism his critique of modernity would later be, Maritain began his literary career as a fervent antimodernist. His 1906 conversion to Catholicism had signaled the culmination of a search for meaning in part provoked by the scientism and agnosticism of Sorbonne lecturers who, in the words of his wife Raïssa, "despaired of *truth*, whose very name was unlovely to them and could be used only between the quotation marks of a disillusioned smile." The young professor at Paris' Institut Catholique was by the 1920s the philosophy editor of *La Revue Universelle*, a periodical linked to (though not officially affiliated with) Charles Maurras' reactionary, anti-Semitic Action Française movement and newspaper. Maritain, who was called (perhaps wrongly) the "philosopher of Action Française" during this period, embraced a strident antimodernism that carried with it, in the wake of World War I, an unmistakable anti-Germanism. His 1922 book *Antimoderne* also excoriated "liberalism, Americanism, modernism . . . [and] Masonic dogmas of necessary Progress and humanitarian Optimism." Maritain was ready for intellectual confrontation. The "modern schism inaugurated in fact, though not in intent, by the antiquarians of the Renaissance and Reformation, and more consciously by Descartes" had amounted to nothing less than a descent into "barbarism pure and simple."

In *Three Reformers* (1925), Maritain chronicled the roots of this "modern schism" by tracing the breakdown of the medieval synthesis of faith and reason.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He treated the three subjects of this intellectual antibiography—Martin Luther, René Descartes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—as architects of the errors of modern culture. Luther stands accused of having banished reason "to the foulest place in the house." The break with Rome also sets the tone for subsequent German history. "In Luther," Maritain writes, "the swollen consciousness of the self is essentially a consciousness of will." For his part, Descartes creates an intellectual system that repudiates reason's reliance on the past, beating the "retreat of the human mind on itself" and irremediably rupturing the link between "intelligence and Being." Lastly, Rousseau merits scorn mixed with pity for his detachment from everything except his "exorbitant Individuality." "A stupendous perverter, Rousseau aims not at our heads but a little below our hearts." Preaching the perfectibility of human nature divorced from the action of grace or participation in the divine, Rousseau offers a "myth of political pantheism" destined to corrupt and destroy the human person in the name of an exalted—but for Maritain, heartbreakingly hopeless—individualism.

Not long after *Three Reformers* was published, a papal condemnation of Maurras led to Maritain's definitive break with the Action Française coterie, a rupture that has been portrayed ever since as both traumatic and liberating. The bitterness of the Action Française controversy helped to make Maritain more open to the virtues of parliamentary democracy; it moved him away from the extreme rancor of some of his earlier antibourgeois and antiliberal diatribes. Maritain's advocacy of a personalist democracy dedicated to "a social and temporal realization of the truths of Christianity," heightened by his association in the early '30s with *Esprit* founder Emmanuel Mounier, also took shape as a response to the bitter polarization of French domestic politics, a sometimes violent pitting of left against right.

Integral Humanism, published in 1936, the year that civil war broke out in Spain, traces three movements or stages in what Maritain calls "the dialectic of anthropocentric humanism." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a *classical* "Christian naturalism" fostered an incipient separation of Western culture from "supreme supernatural standards" that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would usher in a second movement of *bourgeois* "rational optimism." This second movement, incorporating and building upon the first, placed increasing faith in the exclusive aim of material progress and a concomitant drive to "free man from the superstition of revealed religion." The third movement is the twentieth century's reaping of a *revolutionary* harvest, "when man, placing his ultimate end decisively in himself and no longer able to endure the machine of this world, engages in a war of desperation to make a wholly new humanity rise out of a radical atheism." The human person has come to think of himself as purely material, and "materialized man thinks he can be man or superman only if God is not God."

Maritain's antimodernism is certainly still present in this new analysis; but now, even on the brink of a worldwide nihilistic crisis, he makes room for hope in the form of a new Christendom:

> There is but one solution for the history of the world, I mean in a Christian regime, however it may be otherwise. It is that the creature be truly respected *in* its connection with God and because receiving everything from Him: humanism but theocentric humanism, rooted where man has his roots, integral humanism, humanism of the incarnation.

Maritain's personalism, seen as the imperative of the incarnation, was forged in the controversies, crises, and manifestos of the '30s, and centered on a politics of the human person as *imago Dei*. His consequent emphasis on social justice, in *Integral Humanism* and elsewhere, coupled with his condemnation of Franco's "crusade" in Spain, led him to be branded a "Red Christian" by some critics. In fact, Maritain's fixation on what he called the "primacy of the spiritual" precluded any ideological or even party allegiance. But this indifference to most partisan disputes did not prevent him from responding quickly and decisively when the Nazi order began to envelope Europe.

Maritain saw World War II as nothing less than an apocalyptic passage through unprecedented destruction. Civilization had entered the "end of an age":

> If we want to take the measure of the horrible war that the Pagan Empire has unleashed on the world and which kills not only men but consciences as well and wears nations threadbare, starves the children and destroys throughout Europe and the world the vital resources of the generations to come, we must understand that it is a moment of paroxysm in the liquidation of a world. The end of the Roman Empire was a minor event compared with what we behold.

Such assessments pervade Maritain's wartime writings, which portray the high tide of totalitarianism as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

something of an overdue historical disfiguration, after four centuries of anthropocentric humanism undertaken apart from God.

Viewed in this light, the passing of modernity may seem to be no cause for mourning. Yet France's fall to Germany in 1940, viewed from America, where a lecture tour became a long exile for Maritain, was emotionally devastating. Maritain confided to his friend and former student Yves Simon that he could only "cry out of sorrow and cry out of shame." Maritain continued to experience the temptation of despair throughout the war—especially in reference to the emerging reality of the Shoah—but he sought to counteract it with active engagement in the war effort, both by speaking every week on the radio to his fellow Frenchmen and by writing books destined to be read both in America and in France. The U.S. Army Air Force would assist in this latter mission by airdropping his books over occupied France. (To Mortimer Adler he wrote, "You can imagine my philosophy falling thus from heaven!")

Maritain's involvement with the Resistance began long before America entered the conflict; he wrote *France My Country, Through the Disaster* in autumn 1940 to counteract the collaborationist propaganda of Vichy France. This slim volume would be distributed throughout the occupied and unoccupied zones, with one historian calling it the first "breviary" of the Resistance. Here, as in so many of his works, Maritain's political engagement and his sense of history were inseparable. The late Third Republic's stalemated multiparty system, the failures of appeasement and the Maginot Line, and the abdication of French democracy after the June 1940 capitulation all stemmed from what he described as the deep-rooted philosophical error of

> those genteel Machiavellians among the French bourgeoisie, those unfortunates who toyed with Machiavellian thought but lacked Machiavellianism in their blood. They missed the rise of total Machiavellianism, triumphant over their reasonable Machiavellianism, and, for the advantage of the most inhuman and pitiless of revolutions, making game of their worship of an order without justice.

For Maritain, France would only receive justice and true order after an overdue "spiritual overhauling" that would follow an Allied victory and the upholding of a French spirit of resistance in the interim.

The January 1942 article "The End of Machiavellianism" forecasts the imminent end of his own era's worship of power for power's sake. In the essay, Maritain explains that the Florentine had based his precepts on the false assumption that the human creature is by nature completely bad—to which Maritain responds that "human nature remains good in its very essence and root tendencies, and that such a basic goodness joined to a swarming multiplication of particular evils is the very mystery and the very motive power of struggle and progression in mankind." Challenging the Machiavellian premise by tying incarnation and natural law to historical progress, Maritain proceeds to distinguish between traditional *Realpolitik* and a more recently developed "absolute" strain of "impetuous, irrational, revolutionary, wild, and demoniacal Machiavellianism . . . which draws from this very boundlessness of evil an abominable strength."

In early 1942 this abominable strength still translated into widespread success, but Maritain confidently pointed to its ultimate destruction, since as a force of destruction, activated evil can create nothing lasting. Even if we can never hope to see the fullness of providence in the history of our times, some axiomatic truths nonetheless reveal themselves, such as the idea that "justice and righteousness *tend by themselves* to the preservation of states . . . injustice and evil *tend by themselves* to the destruction of states. . . . Such is the law of the fructification of human actions which is inscribed in the nature of things and which is but the natural justice of God in history." History, in the light of the incarnation, transcends the historical.

Maritain explored this theme in greater detail in the 1942 book *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, which starts from the premise that the "root error of Machiavellianism," and the key to its political demise, is its disregard for the human person and the common good. Maritain envisions the war's end as bringing about a *personalist, communalist, pluralist*, and *theist* society. This last consideration does not bespeak a theocratic impulse on Maritain's part, but rather a conviction that human history has entered a moment when "states will be obliged to choose for or against the gospel." The very idea that man has a "historic vocation . . . is of Christian origin and derives from Christian inspiration." That this vocation can and must be pursued even through the unprecedented destruction of a global war points to what Maritain calls the "double law of the degradation and revitalization of the energy of history."

Even if the fight against the Axis did not promise in and of itself to bring about a full realization of human potential, it did serve the indispensable purpose of vanquishing the Nazi myth of racist dictatorship with incarnational truth, "the truth of God's image naturally imprinted on us." Accordingly, millions of combat-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ants were involved in a struggle hardly perceived in their time:

> In the terrible confusion of our day, it is for those truths which are inseparable from the authentic principle of human emancipation that the free peoples are willy-nilly engaged in a merciless struggle. And it is still through the distorting lens of the false philosophy of Emancipation that they often perceive these truths of the real philosophy of Emancipation for which they are shedding their blood; and it is only by dint of suffering that their eyes are little by little being opened.

In short, Maritain saw in World War II a critical step toward mankind's realization of the suprahistorical state, "when the gospel has penetrated to the very depth of human substance," and "natural law [will] appear in its flower and in its perfection." Such a *prise de conscience* corresponds not only with a temporal quest for freedom, but with the theological virtue of love, defined essentially as the human longing for oneness with God.

Maritain's view of democracy as a "temporal manifestation of the inspiration of the gospel," already emergent in the political crisis of the '30s, reached full fruition in *Christianity and Democracy*, published in 1943. Looking forward to the world that would follow Allied victory, Maritain argued that the peace would be won only "on condition that the Christian inspiration and the democratic inspiration recognize each other and become reconciled." While only a "democratic philosophy of man and society has faith in the resources and the vocation of human nature," the postwar era would present new challenges of recovery and self-mastery. Whereas his previous book focused almost exclusively on the Nazi threat, Maritain's 1943 work anticipated with a mixture of optimism and foreboding the postwar confrontation between democracy and communism. Nothing less than a renewal of heroic humanism would be called for.

Maritain's optimism at the end of World War II was also tempered by his sorrow over the terrible slaughter of the war, epitomized in its senselessness by the Holocaust. His own wife was of Russian-Jewish origin, and Maritain looked on in horror and helplessness at the emerging magnitude of the Shoah, his anguish increased by the memories of his early association with Maurras and Action Française, whose ideas played a part in shaping the authoritarian and racist politics of Vichy. However, his reaction to the Holocaust, expressed here in a radio address to occupied France, went beyond bemoaning his own youthful errors to contemplating the place of an event such as the Shoah in a providential schema of history:

> What the world gives us to contemplate in the great racist persecutions is that Israel is itself engaged on the way of Calvary, because it activates and stimulates earthly history, and because the slave masters do not pardon it for the demands it and its Christ have introduced into the heart of the temporal life of the world, for they will always say No to tyranny and the triumph of injustice.

Maritain's account of the Jewish people's historical vocation inverts the traditional anti-Judaic prejudice by offering an unsettling vision of a people punished not for its sins but for its sacred role in history. One is accordingly reminded of Maritain's overall vision of history as myriad mysteries, including those of evil, pointing to a resolution possible only in the light of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.

In the wake of the Allied victory, Maritain outlined a progressive, providential plan of history by expounding on his philosophy of the human person. *The Person and the Common Good*, which he completed in early 1946, built upon his wartime experiences as he reiterated themes already apparent in his work of the '20s. For Maritain, the Nazi terror demonstrated above all that a "purely biological conception of society" leads inevitably to the cheapening of human life, in which the termination of the undesirables becomes not only tolerated but also desired. Indeed, all three principal forms of materialist philosophy of society—bourgeois individualism, collectivist communism, and racialist dictatorship—can be said to rest on the same tendency to "disregard the human *person* in one way or another and in its place, to consider, willingly or not, the *material individual alone*."

Even in bourgeois liberalism, he insists, "the state takes the place of the genuine community" of human persons. For Maritain, all three of these materialist philosophies are disastrous substitutes for the Christian vision. At the same time, he retains the conviction that the "drama of the modern democracies has consisted in the unwitting quest for something good." This conviction entails a belief that the unfolding of human history, even and perhaps especially in times of crisis, and heightens "the awareness of the dignity of the human person and the eternal vocation of every man, which the gospel has imprinted on the heart of humanity." History's "double movement" involves humanity grasping for false lures of emancipation while slowly moving

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toward true freedom in God, a "paradox of social life" that Maritain insists "will never be terminated here below."

Maritain helped to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights during his tenure as France's envoy to the Holy See between 1945 and 1948. Speaking to an audience in Rome on Bastille Day 1947, the ambassador recalled that, for the Christian, hope "is itself a force and an agent in history." Speaking the following January on the "ambivalence of history," Maritain specified the impact of World War II on the future: "By a phenomenon that responds to profound laws, the degradation of human conduct is accompanied by a progress in human consciousness and in moral knowledge, which illuminates more vividly than ever the idea of the human person and of human rights."

Maritain more fully elucidated this perspective in *Man and the State*, which was published in 1951 while he was on the philosophy faculty at Princeton University. Perhaps his best-known work, *Man and the State* is usually read for its rejection of the post-Bodin absolute sovereignty of the state in favor of a personalist democracy, and for its call for world government. Here the possibility of a new Christendom, first broached in *Integral Humanism*, is filtered through the wartime pluralism that culminated in the 1948 Universal Declaration. Maritain envisions Christians and non-Christians finding at least a bare minimum of moral agreement:

> If a new civilization is to be Christianly inspired, if the body politic is to be quickened by the leaven of the gospel in temporal existence itself, it will be because Christians will have been able, as free men speaking to free men, to revive in the people the often unconscious Christian feelings and moral structures embodied in the history of the nations born out of the old Christendom, and to persuade the people, or the majority of the people, of the truth of the Christian faith, or at least of the validity of Christian social and political philosophy.

Here again we see how Maritain's incarnational faith informs his sense of history.

Maritain's 1957 book *On the Philosophy of History* further developed the themes of providence and progress, with specific emphasis on the ways in which the philosophy of history—dealing as it does with "the final application of philosophical truths . . . to the entire movement of humanity"—mirrors moral philosophy. What he terms the "law of the two-fold contrasting progress" testifies to the simultaneous growth of good and evil in history. Drawing on biblical metaphor, he looks to Jesus' parable about the wheat field sowed with tares, not to be separated until the final harvest (Matthew 13:24-30). For Maritain, the mission of today's Christians is not to resolve this tension, but to contribute to it by taking up the cross in the historical events of their time.

Maritain's emphasis on the tension between good and evil in history was accompanied by a greater softening of his antimodernism. His discussion of ambivalence in history emphasized both "great spiritual errors in modern times" and "great truths . . . discovered." For example, despite Rousseauian excess, the Enlightenment offered the first modern rationale for a democratic philosophy already anticipated by the gospel. According to Maritain, "no human event is absolutely pure, no human event is absolutely evil." Historically speaking, the good can be found in unexpected places.

The "law of the progress of moral conscience," referring to humanity's ability to grasp natural law, also figures prominently in Maritain's mature philosophy of history. Coming just a decade after the end of World War II, this affirmation of progress might sound rather odd if not for Maritain's previous remarks about persons and groups unwittingly pursuing a good not readily discernible in any given era. Humanity achieves understanding much the same way that the individual person does—through the habits of living virtuously and participating in truth. This progressive education of the species is historically driven and depends on changing social conditions more than any intellectual achievement, for "in general, the work of theoretical reflection cannot replace in moral matters the slow advance of consciousness, conscience, and experience in mankind." Maritain does not take a sanguine view of the human cost of this collective experience: "The devil hangs like a vampire on the side of history. History goes on, nonetheless, and goes on with the vampire." If the world can receive the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, then history, despite its ambiguity, cannot be left to the devil.

The dialectical relation between God and history is a major theme in Maritain's later work, as he repeatedly stresses that "according to the gospel, the world will never be fully reconciled with Christ within the course of human history," while also maintaining that the impossibility of attaining the kingdom of God within human history "is all the more reason why we should strive toward it." What is unattainable for humans alone is not unattainable for grace. The restless, temporally engaged Christian must wrestle with a world that ceaselessly denies or misunderstands the role of the divine in history. Maritain lists three corresponding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"illusions": the "anthropocratic," which posits the "self-movement of human history" through economic forces; the "satanocratic," resigned to a fallen world ruled by the Devil and bereft of possibilities of progress until the Parousia; and the "theocratic," which oppressively overemphasizes the prospects of establishing the kingdom of God within history. A truly Christian philosophy must reject these philosophies of "pure immanentist or atheistic evolution" on the grounds that they all assume an endless process of change while also insisting that their own pronouncements somehow stand outside of history. The Christian must yield authorship to Another.

In 1960 Maritain's wife Raïssa died and he returned to France. He lived the remainder of his life among the Little Brothers of Jesus in Toulouse. His 1962 lectures to the monks on the problem of evil were published in a book titled *God and the Permission of Evil*, in which he distinguishes between the causative good of God's creation and the permissive evil that stems from human freedom. Establishing evil's place in history in the face of God's innocence, Maritain proceeds to reaffirm the commingling of grace and nature in history, again citing the gospel example of the wheat and the tares. Pondering the unfolding of grace and nature in his own life, he concludes the lectures with the following self-appraisal: "You know that in my youth I spent some years breaking windows, and afterwards I tried as best I could to open doors, and to open paths. That is my calling."

Maritain was honored as the doyen of Catholic intellectuals by Pope Paul VI—the Italian translator of *Three Reformers* who called Maritain "my teacher"—at the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Many were therefore shocked the following year when Maritain published *The Peasant of the Garonne*, which included a bitter polemic against what he called the "frenzied modernism" that followed in the wake of Vatican II. The Church, he claimed, had belatedly curbed its almost Manichaean contempt for the world only to unwittingly encourage an erosion of doctrine and an all-too-eager desire among the clergy and laity for headlong accommodation with contemporary society. Maritain received encouragement from his friend Thomas Merton, who wrote to him from his monastery in Kentucky, lamenting "all the incredible nonsense that is being preached and said about a religionless religion, about total commitment to the secular world." Merton wondered if some of these "poor idiots" could remember Auschwitz or Dachau, let alone Calvary.

Despite its caustic criticism of the Council, the book provided further evidence that Maritain now viewed history as an ever-opening vision of the kingdom of grace. He saw in Vatican II a potential to inspire Christians to pursue the temporal common good without losing sight of their spiritual vocation: "Woe to the world if the Christian were to isolate and separate his temporal mission (then it would be wind only) from his spiritual vocation! The fact remains that this temporal mission requires him to enter as deeply as possible into the agonies, the conflicts, and the earthly problems, social or political, of his age, and not hesitate 'to get his feet wet.'" Seeing the "natural end of the world" as the progressive realization of a human potential that includes greater knowledge of natural law, Maritain looked toward the future with more hope than optimism. As he explained to the Little Brothers in Toulouse, "We have the *duty* to *hope* for the temporal history of men, but without any certitude that the progress of evil will not there accompany, with too much power and too much glitter, the progress of good." Throughout earthly history, evil will always accompany, but will never overwhelm, the good. That is the Christian assurance unwaveringly upheld by Maritain until his death in 1973.

Jacques Maritain's sense of history was based on the idea that the collective experience of humanity can be understood analogically in the same way that, from the Thomistic perspective, one understands the individual human *telos*. Mankind is created in the image of God and its unfolding history illustrates a longing (at most times hardly conscious) for oneness with the Creator. Emphasizing that the "paradox of social life" was essentially unresolvable short of the Second Coming, Maritain nonetheless continually asserted that Christians have a duty, based on the virtue of hope, to engage in a temporal struggle to realize the kingdom that is the promise of the gospel.

Critics have been wrong to claim that Maritain was excessively or unrealistically optimistic. He was, rather, a man of abundant Christian hope living in an age that seemed designed to shatter such hope. While Maritain would agree with MacIntyre that the "Enlightenment project" has proven to be a dismal failure, the kind of incarnational faith from which he drew strength (during World War II, for example) can still bring the light of the gospel to bear on the confusions and derelictions of our own time.

History, for Maritain, was both a challenge and a mystery, to be understood only "at the end of time." It is in this dual sense that history gives a glimmer of truth to those still willing to entertain the concept of truth. Josef Pieper relates this notion of truth to the virtue of prudence—the virtue without which all other virtues

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are more or less inoperative. To write, teach, or learn history, one must comprehend that truth is primarily sought, not constructed. Maritain maintained that this appreciation of truth in history requires modern men and women to confront the full implications of the Cartesian legacy.

By contrast with Maritain's approach, modern and postmodern thinking recoils in horror at the idea of truth-through-participation and dismisses the always unfulfilled striving for truth, arguing that all "metahistorical" thinking and all "master narratives" testify to nothing other than discursive fancies, power relationships, and, worst of all, subjective beliefs. Yet what do we have to put in the place of historical understanding? For Jacques Maritain, the modern era has culminated in a shattering of the claims of disbelief, a paradoxical confirmation of natural law and natural rights through the horrific experience of their denial, and the possibility of a true humanism based on an incarnational hope for a broken world. Such is for Maritain, and for us, the very promise of history. FT

Solitude—The Wilds

What solitary distances, what sere,
remote escarpments, what unbounded, wide
eternities they are where you reside,
in which no creatures of your hand appear!

What desolated vistas, and how drear!
Over clear pools, that solitude must bide,
await your sowing like a holy bride,
to cast off widowhood when you draw near.

The orphaned sky descends, graceless and gray,
to angry thistles in the deep ravine
loud with the bristling of the wounded air.

O dawn, O shepherd! Come and take away
this thirst for you—your shining still unseen
by virgin mountains that await you there!

Miguel Hernandez (1910-1942)
Translated from the Spanish by
Rhina P. Espaillat

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bad Divorce

Elizabeth Marquardt

It is often said that those who are concerned about the social and personal effects of divorce are nostalgic for the 1950s, yearning for a mythical time when men worked, women happily stayed home baking cookies for the kids, and marriages were never dissolved. Yet often the same people who make this charge of mythology are caught in a bit of nostalgia of their own, pining for the sexual liberationism of the 1970s, when experts began to embrace unfettered divorce, confident that children, no less than adults, would thrive once "unhappy" marriages were brought to a speedy end.

Constance Ahrons, who coined the term "the good divorce" in the title of an influential 1992 book that examined ninety-eight divorcing couples, is very much a member of the latter camp. In her new book *We're Still Family: What Grown Children Have to Say About Their Parents' Divorce*, Ahrons returns to those ninety-eight couples to survey their now-grown children. The result is a study based on telephone interviews with 173 young adults from eighty-nine families that tries to advance the idea that it is not divorce itself that burdens children but rather the way in which parents divorce. As in her earlier book, Ahrons argues that the vocabulary we use to discuss divorce and remarriage is negative; she would prefer that we regard divorced families as "changed" or "rearranged" rather than as broken, damaged, or destroyed. She claims that upbeat language will, above all, help children to feel less stigmatized by divorce. Both of her books offer many new terms, such as "binuclear" and "tribe," to describe divorced families. The specific novelty of the new book is Ahrons' claim that her interviewees view their parents' divorces in a positive light.

We're Still Family: What Grown Children Have to Say About Their Parents' Divorce

By Constance Ahrons
HarperCollins
304 pp. $24.95.

According to Ahrons, over three-quarters of the young people whom she interviewed do not wish that their parents were still together. A similar proportion feel that their parents' decision to divorce was a good one, that their parents are better off today, and that they themselves are either better off because of the divorce or have not been affected by it. Statistically, that sounds overwhelmingly convincing. But an answer to a survey question tells us very little unless we have a context for interpreting it and some grasp of the actual experiences that gave rise to it.

Like those whom Ahrons interviewed, I grew up in a divorced family, my parents having split when I was two years old. Like Ahrons, I am a researcher in the field, having led, with Norval Glenn, a study of young adults from both divorced and intact families that included a nationally representative telephone survey of some 1,500 people. As someone who studies children of divorce and who is herself a grown child of divorce, I have noticed that the kinds of questions that get asked in such studies and the way the answers are interpreted often depend on whether the questioner views divorce from the standpoint of the child or the parent.

Take, for example, Ahrons' finding that a majority of people raised in divorced families do not wish that their

ELIZABETH MARQUARDT *is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values in New York City. Her book on children of divorce will be published by Crown.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parents were still together. Ahrons did not ask whether as children these young people had hoped their parents would reunite. Instead, she asked if they wish today that their parents were still together. She presents their negative answers as gratifying evidence that divorce is affirmed by children. But is that really the right conclusion to draw?

Imagine the following scenario. One day when you are a child your parents come to you and tell you they are splitting up. Your life suddenly changes in lots of ways. Dad leaves, or maybe Mom does. You may move or change schools or lose friendships, or all of the above. Money is suddenly very tight and stays that way for a long time. You might not see one set of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins nearly as much as you used to. Then, Mom starts dating, or maybe Dad does. A boyfriend or girlfriend moves in, perhaps bringing along his or her own kids. You may see one or both of your parents marry again; you may see one or both of them get divorced a second time. You deal with the losses. You adjust as best you can. You grow up and try to figure out this "relationship" thing for yourself. Then, some interviewer on the telephone asks if you wish your parents were still together today. A lifetime of pain and anger and adjustment flashes before your eyes. Any memory of your parents together as a couple—if you can remember them together at all—is buried deep under all those feelings. Your divorced parents have always seemed like polar opposites to you. No one could be more different from your mother than your father, and vice versa. "No," you reply to the interviewer, "I don't wish my parents were still together." Of course, one cannot automatically attribute such a train of thought to all of Ahrons' interview subjects. Still, it is plausible, and it might explain at least some of the responses. But Ahrons does not even consider it.

Ahrons also tells us that the vast majority of young people in her study feel that they are either better off or not affected by their parents' divorce. For a child of divorce there could hardly be a more loaded question than this one. The generation that Ahrons is interviewing grew up in a time of massive changes in family life, with experts assuring parents that if they became happier after divorce, their children would as well. There wasn't a lot of patience for people who felt otherwise —especially when those people were children, with their aggravating preference for conventional married life over the adventures of divorce, and their tendency to look askance at their parents' new love interests.

However, a child soon learns the natural lesson that complaining about a parent's choices is a surefire way to be ignored or worse, and that what parents want above all is praise for those choices. Few things inspire as much admiration among divorced parents and their friends as the words of a child reassuring them that the divorce was no big deal—or even better, that it gave the child something beneficial, like early independence, or a new brother or sister. Parents are proud of a resilient child. They are embarrassed and frustrated by a child who claims to be a victim. And who among us wants to be a victim? Who would not rather be a hero, or at least a well-adjusted and agreeable person? When the interviewer calls on the telephone, what will the young adult be more likely to say? Something like "I'm damaged goods"? Or "Yes, it was tough at times but I survived it, and I'm stronger for it today." It is the second reply that children of divorce have all their lives been encouraged to give; and the fact that they are willing to give it yet again is hardly, as Ahrons would have it, news.

Thus, Ahrons' statistics on their own hardly constitute three cheers for divorce. Far more meaningful and revealing are the extended quotations from interview subjects with which the book is liberally studded. She writes, for instance, that Andy, now thirty-two, sees "value" in his parents' divorce. Why? Because

> I learned a lot. I grew up a lot more quickly than a lot of my friends. Not that that's a good thing or a bad thing. People were always thinking I was older than I was because of the way I carried myself.

Treating a sad, unfortunate experience (like being forced to grow up more quickly than one's peers) as something neutral or even positive is merely one example of what can happen when a person attempts to conform to a culture that insists that divorce is no big deal. To take such an ambivalent response as clear evidence that divorce does no damage, as Ahrons does, is inexcusable.

Ahrons cheerfully reports other "good" results of divorce. Here, for example, is Brian, whose parents split when he was five:

> In general, I think [the divorce] has had very positive effects. I see what happens in divorces, and I have promised myself that I would do anything to not get a divorce. I don't want my kids to go through what I went through.

Tracy, whose parents divorced when she was twelve, sees a similar upside to divorce:

> I saw some of the things my parents did and know not to do that in my marriage and see the way they treated each other and know not to do that to my spouse and my children. I know [the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> divorce] has made me more committed to my husband and my children.

These are ringing endorsements of divorce as a positive life event? Like the testimony of a child who's learned a painful but useful lesson about the dangers of playing with fire, such accounts indicate that the primary benefit of divorce is to encourage young people to avoid it in their own lives if at all possible.

Then there are the significant problems with the structure of Ahrons' study itself. While the original families were recruited using a randomized method, the current study lacks any control group. In other words, Ahrons interviewed plenty of young people from divorced families but spoke to no one of similar ages from intact families. So she really can't tell us anything at all about how these young people might differ from their peers.

Rather than acknowledging that her lack of a control group is a serious limitation, Ahrons sidesteps the issue. In several places she compares her subjects to generalized "social trends" or "their contemporaries" and decides, not surprisingly, that they are not all that different. Thus, Ahrons notes that many of the young people from divorced families told her that they frequently struggled with issues of "commitment, trust, and dealing with conflict," but on this finding she comments, "These issues are precisely the ones that most adults in this stage of their development grapple with, whether they grow up in a nuclear family or not." Never mind that she has not interviewed any of those other young people, or cited any studies to back up her contention, or acknowledged the possibility that, while all young people do have to deal with these kinds of interpersonal issues, some have a much harder time doing it than others. Ahrons instead wholly dismisses the pain expressed by the children of divorce and assures us that they are simply passing through a normal developmental phase.

When it comes to her conclusions, Ahrons claims that "if you had a devitalized or high-conflict marriage, you can take heart that the decision to divorce may have been the very best thing you could have done for your children." While research does show that children, on average, do better after a high-conflict marriage ends (the same research, by Paul Amato and Alan Booth, also shows that only one-third of divorces result from high-conflict marriages), no one—Ahrons included—has shown that children do better when an adult ends a marriage he or she perceives as "devitalized." Children don't much care whether their parents have a "vital" marriage. They care whether their mother and father live with them, take care of them, and don't fight a lot.

As in her first book, Ahrons continues to hope that adults who can't get along while married will suddenly become selfless and cooperative when divorced. Of divorced parents she writes, "With parents who can communicate and negotiate and accommodate, children have the best opportunity to thrive." Well, yes, but couples who can do these things could probably find a way to stay married, giving their children a far better opportunity to thrive.

Ahrons also remains preoccupied with the concept of stigma. She writes, for instance, that we are seeing "progress" because a high divorce rate has the effect of reducing the stigma experienced by children of divorce. That's all well and good, but one wonders why Ahrons gives stigma so much attention while saying nothing about a far more damaging social problem for children of divorce—namely, silence. Consider my own experience. The type of family in which I grew up was radically different from the intact family model. Yet no one around me, not even therapists, ever once acknowledged that fact. Never mind that my beloved father lived hours away, or that the mother I adored was often stressed as she tried to earn a living while also acting as a single parent. I was left to assume, like many children of divorce, that whatever problems I struggled with were no one's fault but my own. The demand that children of divorce keep quiet and get with the program puts them in the position of protecting adults from guilt and further stress—effectively reversing the natural order of family life in which the adults are the protectors of children.

Ahrons is remarkably unsympathetic to the children on whom this burden is laid. What do children of divorce long for? According to Ahrons, they nurture unrealistic hopes for "tidy," "perfect" families. She uses these words so frequently—the first term appears at least six times in the book and the second at least four times—that she sometimes appears to be portraying children of divorce as weird obsessives. Speaking directly to children of divorce, Ahrons offers the following advice: "You may not have the idyllic family you dreamed of . . . [but] often the only thing within our control is how we perceive or interpret an event." "For example, you can choose to see your family as rearranged, or you can choose to see it as broken." Indeed, the curative powers of social constructivism are nothing short of miraculous. Encouraging her readers to stop using the descriptive term "adult child of divorce," she asserts that "it's a stigmatizing label that presumes you are deficient or traumatized. . . . If you have fallen prey to using it to explain something about yourself, ask yourself if it is keeping you from making

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changes that might bring you more satisfaction in your life." Apparently, coming to grips with one's family history and the deepest sources of one's sadness and loneliness is the worst thing a child can do.

Ahrons wants above all to get children to stop expecting perfection from their family lives. But one wonders if she would be willing to pass along the same advice to men and women who are considering divorce. More than one couple has found that lowering expectations for a perfect marriage—one that fulfills both individuals in every way, emotional, financial, and sexual—has saved their marriage. Ahrons is not entirely wrong to say that our perceptions can shape our reality. But on whom should the primary responsibility for perception-modification be placed? On adults, or children?

Ahrons surely knows more about the tragedies of divorce than her thesis allows her to admit. She has studied divorced families for years. She has worked with them as a clinician. She has been through divorce herself. Yet she inevitably follows up heartbreaking observations of interviewees with the confident assertion that everyone involved would be so much happier if only they talked themselves out of—and even walked away from—their anguish. As she writes in one (unintentionally haunting) passage, "Over the years I have listened to many divorcing parents in my clinical practice talk about how much they look forward to the day when their children will be grown and they won't have to have anything more to do with their exes." Is it possible to imagine a sadder or more desperate desire than this one—the longing for one's children to grow up faster so that relations with one's ex-spouse can be more effectively severed? In such passages it becomes obvious that all of Ahrons' efforts to explain away the tragedy of divorce and its legacy are in vain. In the end, the theory collapses before reality.

Ahrons' poorly structured study and far too tendentious thesis are of no help to us in thinking through our approach to divorce and its consequences. Children of divorce are real, complex people who are deeply shaped by a new kind of fractured family life—one whose current prevalence is unprecedented in human history. These children are not nostalgic for "tidy," "perfect," "idyllic" families. They grieve the real losses that follow from their parents' divorce. They don't need new words to describe what they've been through. Ordinary words will serve quite well—provided that people are willing to listen to them. FT

Talking to Lord Newborough

(Lt. William Charles Wynn, 1873-1916,
4th Baron Newborough, whose grave overlooks
the Vale of Ffestiniog in North Wales)

I'd perch beside your gravestone years ago,
a boy who thought you old at forty-three.
I knew you loved this quiet place, like me.
We'd gaze towards Maentwrog far below,
kindred spirits, and I'd talk to you.
Sometimes I asked what it was like to die—
were you afraid? You never did reply,
and silence rested lightly on us two.

These days the past is nearer, so I came
to our remembered refuge on the hill,
expecting change yet finding little there:
my village and the Moelwyns look the same,
Saint Michael's Church commands the valley still—
but you, old friend, are younger than you were.

David Anthony

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Santayana Lately Revisited

Richard John Neuhaus

Reaching a certain age that rather abruptly presents itself as one's maturity, I discover a more frequent impulse to reflect on the influences that brought me to this point. "Impulse" is the right word, for there is nothing systematic about such reflection, which is perhaps appropriate to an intellectual formation that has always struck me—and, no doubt, others—as notoriously unsystematic. In my undergraduate years I read, more or less on a whim, George Santayana. I suppose somebody recommended that I do so, or he was declared to be very important in one of the many books that at the time I took to be very important. In any event, I had the idea that Santayana was someone to be read if one aspired to a respectable measure of familiarity with the important thinking of the time. I have a vague recollection that it was Walter Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals* that put me on to Santayana, Lippmann being another of the important people to read.

His admirers, such as John McCormick whose huge and absorbing biography *George Santayana* has just been reissued, suggest that there is something of a Santayana revival underway, and maybe they are right. Certainly, after his death in 1952 at almost ninety years of age, Santayana's stock went into a precipitous decline. I expect that few today would rank him, or know that he was once ranked, among celebrated thinkers such as William James, Bertrand Russell, Arnold Toynbee, or Alfred North Whitehead, with all of whom he was acquainted. But so he was, although by the time I came to Santayana his reputation was fading. Nonetheless, I have to include him on the list of the many who made a lasting impress upon my mind. In contrast to the other thinkers who seemed like giants at the time, I cannot readily say exactly what I learned from Santayana, what doctrine of his I wrestled with, what new body of thought he alerted me to, what changes he worked in my thinking.

Yet he was an influence, and not an insignificant influence. He proposed to my young mind not a philosophical doctrine, and certainly not a system, but a sensibility and style. He wrote with fetching grace on the really big questions about which clever youth fancies itself deadly earnest—the meaning of life and whether or not history is purposeful, for example—and he did so in a manner that intimated an urbanity and worldly wisdom exceeding my limited experience. Most vividly, I recall reading *Character and Opinion in the United States* which, as Santayana intended, provided both an introduction to something like an American intellectual tradition and a schooling in its regrettable inadequacies. There were other books—*The Sense of Beauty, Reason in Religion*, and his one novel, *The Last Puritan*—but they did not inspire me to take on hugely ambitious works such as *The Life of Reason* and his last major project, *Dominations and Powers*.

Santayana was an astonishingly productive author, writing, revising, and planning new projects up to a month before his death in Rome. At the risk of offending members of the Santayana societies that I'm told meet at places as various as Columbia University and Texas A&M, I early concluded that I had learned what

GEORGE SANTAYANA: A BIOGRAPHY

By John McCormick
Transaction
615 pp. $29.95 paper.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS *is Editor-in-Chief of* FIRST THINGS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one needed to learn from that great man. He seemed to be for the intellectual tasting, not for lifelong guidance or argument. In any case, he was put aside in favor of thinkers who made a more compelling claim upon my youthful attentions. McCormick's biography, despite its considerable interest, prompted no regrets about having lingered with Santayana but for a time. Yet it did renew my gratitude for that time.

Santayana is remembered in large part for his aphorisms. Undoubtedly the best known is this: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This is usually quoted to the effect that we should learn from history, which is true but trite. The statement occurs in a discussion of the idea of progress in which Santayana contends that progress is more about retentiveness than about change. "When change is absolute," he wrote, "there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual." The result is that instinct learns nothing from experience. That is part of Santayana's true and not trite response to philosophical positivists in thrall to the religion of Progress. Other aphorisms and maxims reward reflection:

• He was impatient with philosophy's turn to logical analysis, noting with satisfaction that he had never had a formal course in logic. "The constant whetting of the knife is tedious, if it is not proposed to cut anything with it."

• "Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim." A fine line, even if almost exact equivalents are attributed to, among others, Mark Twain and Winston Churchill.

• Rousseau and Walt Whitman exulted in their embrace of elementary and unspoiled humanity, on which Santayana observed, "Nothing is farther from the common people than the corrupt desire to be primitive."

• Reflecting on the formation of our habits of mind and life, he connects learning and passion. "Half our standards come from our first masters, the other half from our first loves."

• In 1932 at the University of California he gave what is probably his best-known lecture, "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy." Contrasting the west with the pretensions of Boston and Harvard, where he had endured studying and, later, teaching as a young professor, he observed: "The 'wild' west is 'wild' on purpose: that is, it is civilization on a holiday—one of the most civilized things possible. But barbarism trying to be 'cultured'—that is the real horror."

• Santayana was a skeptic and an atheist, with the former tempering the stridency of the latter. He allowed that his skepticism was something like a dogma, but at least, he claimed, it had the merit of not multiplying dogmas. "Skepticism is the chastity of the intellect, and it is shameful to surrender it soon or to the first comer: there is nobility in preserving it coolly and proudly through a long youth, until at last, in the ripeness of instinct and discretion, it can be safely exchanged for fidelity and happiness."

• Perhaps piqued by T. S. Eliot's failure to take public notice of his work, he proffers the acerbic judgment: "The thought of T. S. Eliot is subterranean without being profound. . . . He likes this in Christianity and he dislikes that, and feels a general dismay at the natural course of the world. He dreads and does not understand the radical forces at work in the world and in the church; but he is beautifully sensitive to the cross-lights that traverse the middle distance; and he hopes to set up barriers of custom and barriers of taste to keep mankind from touching bottom or quite seeing the light." Even admirers of that great poet may acknowledge a measure of justice in that.

• Convinced of the superiority of the Catholicism with which he identified but which he did not accept, Santayana was disdainful of Protestantism in all its forms, but especially of Anglican pretensions to not being Protestant. He befriended the poet Robert Lowell and tried to bear with him through his bouts with mental derangement, but was mystified by Lowell's apparently brief conversion to Catholicism. "His Catholic piety, though admirable, is not like that of any other Catholic; more like that of some capricious Anglican."

• Of Descartes and his famous *cogito*, and the subsequent "turn to the subject," he wrote: "Descartes who misled the whole chorus of modern philosophers, except Spinoza, by making them fall in love with themselves."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As I say, my youthful attraction to Santayana was in part related to his urbane disdain—an urbanity that I envied and a disdain to which I was prone—for the American habit of marketing and making popular things that should be rare. This, too, comes through in his essay on the genteel tradition: "Our public is well informed and eagerly responsive to everything; it is ready to work pretty hard, and do its share toward its own profit and entertainment. It becomes a point of pride with it to understand and appreciate everything." American art, literary and other, suffers accordingly: "It becomes disorganized, sporadic, whimsical, and experimental. The crudity we are too distracted to refine, we accept as originality, and the vagueness we are too pretentious to make accurate, we pass off as sublimity." That was in 1932, but it might as well be from the current issue of the *New Criterion*. Pretension was compounded by the most clever of the cultured barbarians who pretended to be above it all. At Harvard, Santayana himself belonged to the Laodicean Club, whose members cultivated the pretension of being indifferent to regnant pretensions. He thought this studied indifference well illustrated by a friend who led the cheering at football games with, "Now, gentlemen, cheer lustily, but not too loud."

Reason in Religion addressed questions that interested me greatly. Not because I was experiencing any great crisis of faith, for the Christian account of reality seemed to me both true and endlessly fascinating. But the Lutheran construal of that account, at least as I encountered it, was a matter of accepting truth almost exclusively on the basis of authority—the authority of the Bible as refracted through Luther, seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy, and the magisterium of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. From as far back as I can remember having what might properly be called a theological thought, that approach struck me as arbitrary and stifling. Santayana, sad to report, was not of much help. I did, however, resonate with his polemic against dogmatisms that settled unsettling questions by citing authorities who declared them to be nonexistent. And I welcomed his critique of those who tailored Christianity to fit currently fashionable notions of what is reasonable.

He had nothing good to say about the "modernist" movement in Catholicism led by the likes of Alfred Loisy and George Tyrrell at the turn of the last century. The modernist movement, he wrote, "is not anything precise; but as a general tendency, it consists in accepting all the rationalistic views current or possible in matters of history or science, and then saying that, in a different sense, the dogmas of the Church may still be true." This, he said, was but another game of "double truths," whereas truth—or, as he preferred, "the natural"—is one. The apprehension of truth is finally aesthetic. "Religion and poetry are identical in essence," he declared. ("Essence" is a comprehensive, controlling, and, to my mind, somewhat confused concept throughout Santayana's thought.) The highest poetry, he said, is religion—poetry that is "raised to its highest power. . . . At their point of union both reach their utmost purity and beneficence, for then poetry loses its frivolity and ceases to demoralize, while religion surrenders its illusions and ceases to deceive."

I was impressed for a time by the elegance of the formulation, but was rudely awakened by the realization that Christianity divorced from a commonsense understanding of "fact" was reduced to a poetry contest. The truth about things, and about everything, is adjudicated by whoever succeeds in giving them highest poetic expression. Such was the magisterium of the aesthetic proposed by Santayana. Years later, I would be tutored by Hans Urs von Balthasar on the part played by the beautiful in the discernment of truth, thus retrieving an element of what was attractive in Santayana and setting it firmly within the structure of faith. But that is a story for another time.

Santayana's relation with Catholicism challenges easy summary. Born in Catholic Spain and pointedly carrying a Spanish passport until his death in 1952, he had no doubt that he was on the Catholic side of the great divide of the modern era. Protestantism, he declared, is the national plague of America, and the diluted Protestantism of American intellectuals fell pitifully short of the faith of their Puritan forebears who at least had the intellectual courage of their errors. Despite the support of friends and his success in obtaining a professorship at an early age, it is not too much to say that Santayana despised Harvard and the America of which it was presumably the best. The Harvard of his day, he believed, was cursed by its Calvinistic formation, which resulted in teachers of philosophy guiding lost souls "as if they had been clergymen; and it made no less acute their moral loneliness, isolation, and forced self-reliance because they were clergymen without a church, and not only had no common philosophic doctrine to transmit but were expected not to have one." Santayana, by way of contrast, held himself accountable, in his way, to a tradition both Platonic and Catholic. If he were to think of himself as a clergymen, which he did not, he would not be without a church.

He was on friendly terms with his older colleague William James, but he recognized that James was on the other side of the great divide. James wrote in 1880, "I doubt whether the earth supports a more genuine enemy of all that the Catholic Church inwardly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stands for than I do—*écrasez l'infâme* is the only way I can feel about it." Santayana also recognized that James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, with its individualistic exploration of the extraordinary, was quintessentially Protestant in conception and execution. The study was not about what the Catholic Santayana understood religion to be: "Normal religious experience is the assurance that is living in the world, the economy of which is authoritatively known, so that conduct, sentiment, and expectation have a settled basis." It is not evident how this normal religious experience relates to religion as the highest poetic expression celebrated by the aesthetically privileged, but one suspects that Santayana assumed, although he did not say, that such poetry must be tethered to a communal tradition lived under an authority that he did not himself accept.

He was sure, however, that nothing religiously or philosophically authentic could come from Protestantism. In this light one can understand his spectacularly wrongheaded essay, "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare." In Santayana's telling, Shakespeare joined northern heathenism to Protestantism without passing through Catholicism. Protestantism, he wrote, was fatally obsessed with novelty.

> My philosophy is normal orthodox philosophy, such as has come down from the Indians through the Greeks, to Spinoza. It is simply not Protestant philosophy. The problems of Protestant philosophy do not exist for me: I regard them as products of a confusion of thought, of a heresy. Catholic philosophy differs from the normal only in that it accepts sacred history as well as the true account of the facts: but when the facts are agreed upon, one way or another, philosophy has no real difficulty in discovering what to say. It has said everything essential already. To *invent* a philosophy would be not to have understood.

In this way, the philosophical canon of modernity, including Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and a host of other lapsed Lutherans, was simply declared beside the point. Catholic to the core though Santayana understood himself to be, he would never confess the faith. In his last decade in Rome he lived in a home run by the Blue Nuns, an Irish order so called because of the color of their habit. He was ever alert to their desire to reclaim a lost sheep and left explicit instructions to his executors that, even if in his dying moments he might nod acceptance and be given the last rites, they should understand that he nodded only to get the nuns and their priests to stop pestering him. In no way should his acquiescence be misconstrued as a deathbed conversion.

Shortly afterward, Robert Lowell wrote "For George Santayana," which includes these lines:

> . . . you died
> near ninety,
> still unbelieving, unconfessed, and unreceived,
> true to your boyish shyness of the Bride.

McCormick calls these "fine lines in affirmation of Santayana's atheism." Lowell's intentions aside, others are not so sure of the state of Santayana's soul at the time of his death or, for that matter, during most of his very long life. It is noted that in later years he expressed regret about his earlier and frequently harsh judgments on religious faith. He died unconfessed, or at least unabsolved, but perhaps not unreceived, since he was baptized and never definitively left. And, while he may have been boyishly shy, there is no doubt about his loving the Bride, in his manner.

Of course we cannot know Santayana's spiritual disposition in the moments before he fell into a coma and his friend Daniel Cory pulled the trigger on the morphine overdose. If what he sometimes called his "stoic epicurean" doctrine is to decide the question, Santayana was and is totally indifferent to what we think of his final destiny. In that case, death has nothing to do with him: if he is alive, he is not dead, and, if he is dead, he is not, and therefore death is a matter of indifference. On the other hand, one may in charity be permitted to hope that he is on his way to heaven or in heaven, in which case, if he knows what is happening here, he surely would not want us to think he is in the other place. Yet, if in fact he is in the other place, would it increase or diminish his suffering to know that we imagine him to be in heaven? Such are the imponderables facing those who have a philosophical or religious stake in being sure about Santayana's spiritual disposition at the end. Better, I think, to pray him the best and leave the matter to higher authority.

There is a lot not to like about George Santayana. He affected, or truly held to, a delicately refined superiority to the common run of the follies of mankind. He spent World War I in England and after that lived in Italy, with occasional trips to his native Spain. The Spanish Civil War, two World Wars, and the Cold War were not his business. He expressed admiration for the smart uniforms of the Nazis, was "much impressed" by Stalin, found the jingoism of Churchill distasteful, and approved of Mussolini's success in making the trains run on time. To a friend who was anxious about atom bombs and the death of the innocent, Santayana said that he had read about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He allowed that they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were "disasters, no doubt. But so is the eruption of Mount Vesuvius a disaster." One may be permitted a measure of uneasiness about a philosophy that yields as its final wisdom the observation that things happen.

In the preface to *Dominations and Powers*, he expressed his prejudice in favor of "harmony in strength" as a form of aesthetic perfection, however short-lived. "The gods love and keep in their memories the rare beauties that die young. I prefer the rose to the dandelion; I prefer the lion to the vermin in the lion's skin. In order to obtain anything lovely, I would gladly extirpate all the crawling ugliness in the world." In the age of Hitler and Stalin, to speak of "harmony in strength," "vermin," and "extirpation" exhibited an astounding moral obtuseness that cannot be excused by pleading Santayana's old age, since they displayed the ripeness of sentiments held over a lifetime.

Then there was his anti-Semitism, to which McCormick devotes a full chapter. Santayana said and wrote (usually in private correspondence) all the usual ugly things: Jews are aggressive, money-grubbing, irredeemably alien and subversive, and altogether in bad taste. Santayana was an Anglophiliac and pandered shamelessly to aristocrats and the smart set. In those circles, McCormick emphasizes, anti-Semitism, or at least a pronounced aversion to Jews, was more or less assumed, and, to make the point, he cites unpleasant statements by Trollope, Meredith, Eliot, Harold Nicolson, and Virginia Woolf, among others. There is an evil maxim applied to England, but it could as well be applied to several, perhaps most, countries: "The English definition of an anti-Semite is someone who dislikes Jews more than is necessary."

Measured by what his crowd deemed necessary, Santayana was an anti-Semite. Jews were not beautiful, which in his scheme of things meant they were unnatural—"natural" being the preferred term for truth and beauty. Even Bernard Berenson, who at I Tatti (his exquisite villa near Florence) beautifully worshiped the beautiful, was decidedly not to Santayana's taste, and it had everything to do with Berenson's being a Jew. The more offensive Jew is the Jew who so insidiously disguises his Jewishness. Worse than their not being like us is their affecting to be like us. The anti-Semite is adept at penetrating the disguise.

What is admired in Santayana is disturbingly entangled with what is repugnant. There is much to be said for treating one's life as a work of art. Thinkers as diverse as Balthasar and Abraham Joshua Heschel have written persuasively to that effect. Santayana wrote, "The good is the perfection of life for each creature according to its kind." For him, perfection is measured preeminently by reference to the beautiful. There is, one might observe, truth in the aesthetic, but truth defined by the aesthetic easily descends into sickly aestheticism. With part of his mind, Santayana knew that, and he made a point of distancing himself from the likes of Walter Pater, the nineteenth-century romantic apostle of the beautiful. The younger Santayana was drawn to Pater, especially to his 1885 novel *Marius the Epicurean*. McCormick writes: "In that text Santayana found a fashionable post-Darwinian pessimism, aestheticism of course, and asceticism upheld as an idea, but countered by a pale, peek-a-boo eroticism. It is not the comparatively healthy decadence of Lionel Johnson & Co., but decadence nevertheless and in disguise. 'Paganism' is at once admired and countered by Christian overtones, and the whole indigestible salad is seasoned with a puritanical form of *carpe diem*: seize the day, but seize it perfectly."

The eroticism was, of course, homoeroticism. Lionel Johnson was a poet who died young and beautiful and alcoholic, leaving us the haunting "Dark Angel," containing lines such as:

> Dark Angel, with thine aching lust
> To rid the world of penitence:
> Malicious Angel, who still dost
> My soul such subtile violence!
> . . . .
>
> Through thee, the gracious Muses turn
> To Furies, O mine Enemy!
> And all the things of beauty burn
> With flames of evil ecstasy.
> . . . .
>
> Apples of ashes, golden bright;
> Waters of bitterness, how sweet!
> O banquet of a foul delight,
> Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete!

Santayana was much taken with, although also critical of, G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, published in 1903. At Cambridge, Moore was a member of the secret society known as the Apostles, which included, inter alia, Bertrand Russell, E. M. Forster, Roger Fry, John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, most of whom, with the notable exception of Russell, were homosexual in varying degrees of explicitness. Santayana would come to know most of them. The great contribution of Moore's *Principia*, as some viewed it, was to separate moral predilection from ethical thought, proposing a fundamental challenge to "conventional" ideas such as "good" and "right." McCormick, unlike some who have written on Santayana, delicately says no more than what can be known for sure about how, if at all, he acted upon his homoerotic sensibilities.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In his book *The Realm of Truth* Santayana would write that "the nerve of moral judgment is preference: and preference is a feeling or an impulse to action which cannot be false or true." Elsewhere he writes that when we are repulsed by dishonorable conduct, by lies and filth, our reaction "is essentially aesthetic, because it is not based on reflection and benevolence, but on constitutional sensitiveness." Certainly it is not based on the truth of moral principles, religious or otherwise. Indeed, for Santayana, the Platonic triad of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful becomes the Natural, the Good, and the Beautiful. The latter two are, in turn, encompassed in the first, for, again, the goal is "perfection of life for each creature according to its kind."

Santayana's favored term for his philosophy was "naturalism." To inquire into the whence or wherefore of life is futile; it is enough that it is and is to be lived in its intensity. That is to live spiritually. "I understand by 'spirit' only the awakened inner attention that suffuses all actual feelings and thoughts, no matter how scattered they may be and how momentary, whether existing in an ephemeral insect or in the eternal omniscience of God. Spirit so conceived is not an individual but a category: it is life insofar as it reaches pure actuality in feeling or in thought." At the end of the day, or so it would seem, Santayana was not very far from Walter Pater's counsel: "To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life."

Santayana's books were through most of his life, and especially after the publication of *The Last Puritan*, immensely popular among genteel Americans eager to understand and appreciate everything. An admiring reviewer described him as "a citizen of the world, as well as its benefactor." To which Santayana objected, "It is misleading to call even a good writer or philosopher a *benefactor*; and in my case there was no such motive. I write for fun or by impulse. At best it is art, not benevolence." For fun or by impulse, he was until the last month of his very long life busily revising old books and planning new ones. For whose judgment was he so determined to make himself unmistakably clear? Santayana provides no answer, recognizing only the obligation and desire to actualize his perfection. It would seem to have been a life completely folded in upon itself. The Cartesian way, it seems, is not the only way for philosophers to fall in love with themselves. In such convoluted manner was a philosophy of narcissism in conflict with one who could not be a complete narcissist. A narcissist does not so adamantly insist upon being understood, or let himself be taken hostage to the judgment of the future. His life and work were intended to no other end than as a witness to a self perfectly actualized, but a witness requires witnesses, and in this was the implicitly intended benefaction and dependence on others—and perhaps on an Other—that his philosophy did not permit him to acknowledge.

By the end of McCormick's biography, I had recalled what I knew of Santayana and had learned much more than I knew before. I appreciated again the urbanity, the erudition, the critique of intellectual pretensions, the sardonic and still pertinent observations on our genteel tradition. But, in the end, I sensed neither need nor desire to go back and read him again. What to a young man seemed, for a moment, to be an opening to a larger and more sophisticated world now seemed small, cramped, and fetid. Perhaps I sensed that then, which made it easier to put Santayana's books aside, and put him largely out of mind.

His, it seems to me now, was a sad life; not tragic but sad. No family, no children, no country, no cause, no Church. He was personally kind and generous to the friends who adorned his determinedly singular existence. His was a studied aloofness from the great political, social, and moral dramas of his time. As for the sufferings of victims beyond numbering, what were they to him or he to them? Catholicism was, in affirmation and negation but never in commitment, essential to his identity. He lived from but never for the Church. She would be sustained by the faith of others, and he was displeased when they did not believe as he thought they should. In the indeterminate fluxations of a cosmos in which "things happen" and it is futile to ask about whence or wherefore, he accepted responsibility for nothing except the poem he aspired to be. Poetry at its highest pitch, he had said, is true religion. At times along the way, and in the final moments of consciousness, I would like to think he knew better. He is buried in Rome, in the huge Campo Verano Cemetery, in a section reserved for Spaniards away from home. George Santayana, *requiescat in pace*. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

When Worlds Collide

SNOW
By ORHAN PAMUK
Knopf. 426 pp. $26.

Reviewed by Mark L. Movsesian

TWO MONTHS AFTER the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Turkish author Orhan Pamuk published an essay in the *New York Review of Books* (titled "The Anger of the Damned") in which Pamuk, who is often mentioned as a contender for the Nobel Prize, tried to explain the violent resentment that Muslim societies feel towards the West. Muslim rage, Pamuk wrote, results from a deep sense of inferiority about the backward condition of life in Islamic countries. According to Pamuk, Islamic societies recognize that they have fallen far behind the West and that this state of affairs is, "to some considerable degree," their own fault. This recognition leads to an "overwhelming feeling of humiliation" that causes many to support anti-Western terrorism. Pamuk counseled America to avoid responding to this terrorism with "impetuous military operations" that would only increase the "artificial tension" between "'East' and 'West,' or 'Islam' and 'Christian civilization.'" "The problem facing the West," Pamuk wrote, "is not only to discover which terrorist is preparing a bomb in which tent, which cave, or which street of which city, but also to understand the poor and scorned and 'wrongful' majority that does not belong to the Western world."

One need not endorse Pamuk's views on American military action to agree on the need for better understanding of the Muslim world. This is especially true with regard to Pamuk's own country. For decades, Americans have seen Turkey as the model Muslim society, one that combines a tolerant form of Islam with stable democratic institutions. This view reflects America's appreciation of Turkey's role as a staunch Cold War ally. It also reflects a willful blindness to history and contemporary Turkish politics. As far as tolerance is concerned, there is little occasion for tolerating non-Muslims in Turkey today, as the country all but eliminated its once sizable Christian minorities through mass murder and deportation in the last century. And modern Turkey's stability—its resistance to "political Islam" or "Islamism"—has been largely a function of military control. A watered-down Islamist party now governs Turkey, though there is always the possibility of military intervention, as occurred the last time that Islamists finished first, in 1996 parliamentary elections.

In his brilliant new novel, *Snow*, Pamuk takes up where his *New York Review* essay left off. Part poetic

MARK L. MOVSESIAN *is a professor of law at Hofstra University.*

Less time searching. More time reading.

Announcing a Convenient New Resource for the Serious Reader

Finally. A bookstore that features only the best titles on religion and public life. And it's only a mouse click away.

At the **FT BOOKSTORE**, you'll find books by FIRST THINGS editors, contributors, friends, and a selection of fascinating titles recently reviewed in the journal.

Now locating the books that you want to read is as easy as going to our website, www.firstthings.com. Visit us today!

FT BOOKSTORE Your gateway to the best books at the best price.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meditation, part absurdist satire, *Snow* vividly depicts present-day Turkey as pervaded by despair. The novel addresses the conflict between secularism and Islamism, the different conceptions of religion in Muslim and Western societies, and the impossibility of individualism in Muslim culture. The novel's insights, sad to say, confirm the civilizational divide that presently exists between Turkey and the West. While *Snow* helps one understand the poverty and shame that beset Turkey, it also shows how the most powerful elements in Turkish society—the secular nationalists and the Islamists—both utterly reject foundational ideals that can be recognized as authentically Western. As long as these groups retain their influence, *Snow* suggests, any reconciliation between the Western and Muslim worlds will be no more than superficial.

SET DURING THE early 1990s, *Snow* takes place mostly in Kars, a desolate city in eastern Turkey. A hundred years ago, when Turks shared the city with Christian Armenians, Kars had wealth and culture. (*Snow* cautiously alludes to the genocide of the millions of Armenians who once lived in eastern Turkey; their abandoned churches, theaters, and hospitals, now used for appliance warehouses and torture chambers, stand in the novel as reminders of that crime and of the degradation of Turkish culture that followed). At present, the city is in appalling condition. Pamuk depicts it as unrelentingly poor, dirty, and depressed. Unemployment is rampant; men sit for hours in teahouses, staring blankly at television sets. Young women, exhausted by the beatings they receive from fathers and husbands, are committing suicide. Partly because of Kurdish unrest, and partly because of an upcoming election in which the Islamists are favored, the whole city is bugged by the domestic intelligence service, the MIT. "The only people who can be happy in Kars," one character says, "are the idiots and the villains."

Into this world comes the novel's protagonist, Ka, a failed poet who has spent twelve years living off political asylum benefits in Frankfurt. A disillusioned leftist, Ka is resentful of ideologies that have led him nowhere and is conflicted about his own identity. He affects the air of a European intellectual, but refuses to learn German and returns to Turkey, in part, to find a Turkish girl to marry. When a journalist friend asks him to cover the "suicide epidemic" in Kars, he jumps

Books by Hauerwas for the Life of the Church

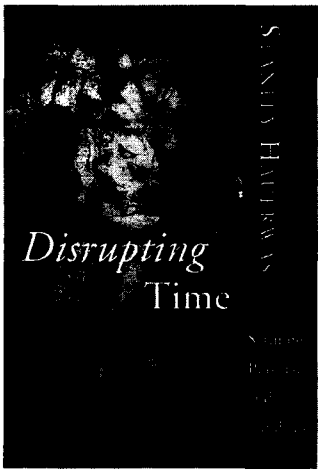
Cross-Shattered Christ
Meditations on the Seven Last Words
Stanley Hauerwas
1587431319 • 112 pp. • $14.99c

In *Cross-Shattered Christ*, Hauerwas offers a close and moving reading of each of Christ's last sayings. This small, powerful volume is theologically rich, yet full of humility—meditative, but never "preachy." In true Hauerwasian fashion, the pithy discussion opens our ears to the language of scripture while opening our hearts to a clearer vision of God's redemption.

BrazosPress

At your local bookstore, www.brazospress.com, or call 1-800-877-2665
Subscribe to "Border Crossings," the Brazos monthly electronic newsletter, at www.brazospress.com

Disrupting Time
Sermons, Prayers, and Sundries
Stanley Hauerwas
1592449395 • 252pp. • $26.00



Stanley Hauerwas is a man of many gifts. These include wide and deep learning, passion about the issues of the day, a pastoral heart, a love of the Lord Jesus, and a puckish humor that permeates everything he does. Hauerwas has forged these gifts into a vocation as a daring, candid, imaginative ethicist in the service of the Gospel. All of these gifts are richly on exhibit in this book.
—Walter Brueggemann,
Columbia Theological Seminary

Cascade Books
A division of Wipf & Stock

Available in bookstores • www.wipfandstock.com • Tel. (541) 344-1528
orders@wipfandstock.com • 199 West 8th Ave., Eugene, Oregon 97401

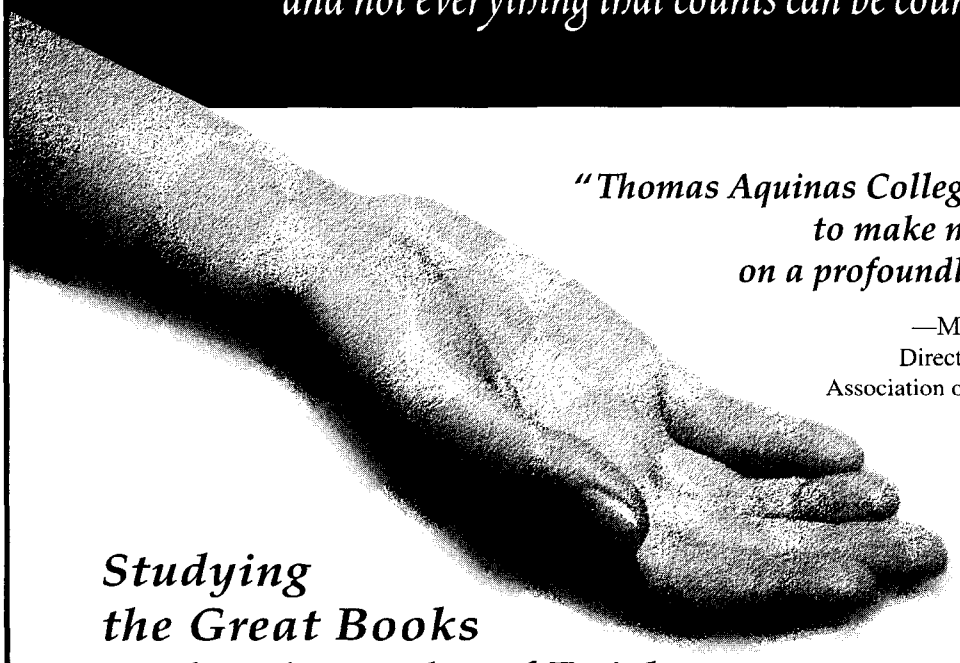
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the chance. An acquaintance from university days who has recently divorced her husband lives in Kars, and Ka hopes he can convince this woman, Ipek, to return to Frankfurt with him. Ka arrives just before a snowstorm blocks all roads in and out of the city, isolating Kars from outside contact for the next three days.

Ka quickly gets caught up in the violent religious and political struggles that have poisoned Kars. On his first day in town, he witnesses an Islamist assassin kill a university administrator who has banned women students from wearing Islamic headscarves to class. (The transcript of the conversation between the addled assassin and his victim, recorded by one of the ubiquitous MIT microphones, is at once comic and chilling.) That evening, elements of the army, police, and MIT take advantage of the storm to stage a secularist coup, rounding up, torturing, and killing Kars' Islamists, including several teenagers at the religious high school. Ka is present as the coup is proclaimed in the city's theater, where soldiers fire into an audience that the coup plotters have intentionally provoked by reviving an anti-Islamist play called "My Fatherland or My Head Scarf." In a touch of black humor, the coup is led by a broken-down itinerant actor named Sunay, whose megalomaniacal dreams of playing Ataturk are reduced to this real-life parody as the dictator of Kars.

For the next two days, Ka, whose only goal is to stay alive long enough

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."
— Albert Einstein



"Thomas Aquinas College showed me how to make meaning out of life on a profoundly spiritual level."

—Mona Gahan, Class of 1976
Director of Professional Services
Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC)
Stone Belt, Indiana

Studying the Great Books Under the Light of Faith

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE
California

800 • 634 • 9797
www.thomasaquinas.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

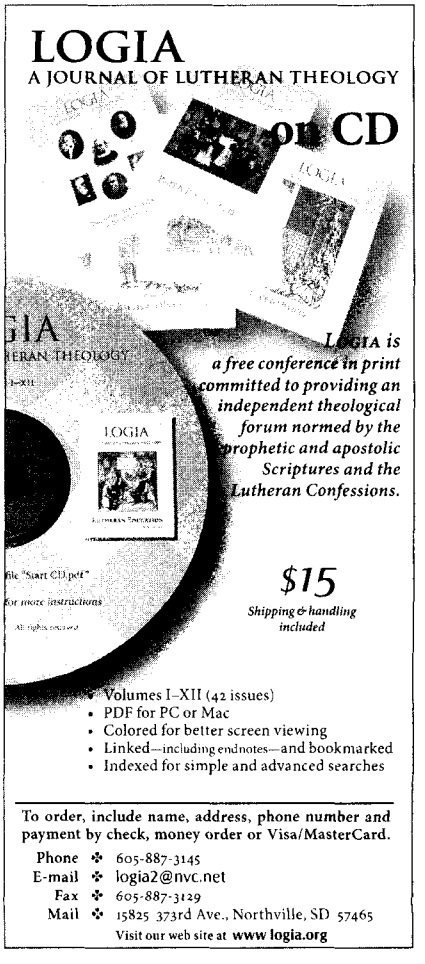
for the roads to clear so he can escape with Ipek, serves as the uneasy mediator between the secularists and the Islamists, who are led by a charismatic terrorist named Blue. Each of these camps despises the other, and both despise the Western values Ka represents. For Sunay and his followers, the secular Enlightenment ideals they claim as their own are merely the cover for aggressive nationalism—for fascism, really. As the title of their play suggests, the conflict they see is not between fundamentalism and individual conscience, or "superstition" and scientific inquiry, but between state and faith. Islamism, they insist, is a movement hatched by foreign enemies who aim to divide Turks and to weaken the fatherland. Islamism must therefore be crushed—as must sentimental intellectuals of Ka's type who flirt with Western ideals of religious freedom and journalistic truth-telling that can only encourage more internal dissent.

The Islamists from their side also distrust Ka. Pamuk presents some of them as sincerely pious, though hopelessly muddled, the sort of people who think that atheism is a disease one can catch by riding with strangers in elevators, who view reason and logic as Western tools designed to rob them of their faith. Ka does engage in genuinely serious discussions about God with one religious high school student. (These passages are faintly reminiscent of *The Brothers Karamazov*; one of the novel's epigraphs is a quotation from Dostoevsky's notebooks for *Karamazov*.) For most of the Islamists, though, the movement has little to do with worship or the life of the spirit. Islamism's appeal, Pamuk suggests, lies rather in the balm of group solidarity that it provides for people wounded by shame at how their society has fallen behind the West.

The local Islamist leader, Blue, began his career as a self-described "godless leftist" who threw stones at American sailors. His hatred of the West eventually led him to Islamism and he spent years fighting alongside the Chechens and the Bosnians. He has no interest in God; Islamism is a vehicle for his implacable anger against the outside forces that have diminished his civilization. For example, he bewails the fact that no one any longer reads the thousand-year-old Persian epic *Shehname*. Because of "the spell of the West," one cannot purchase in Istanbul a work once known by millions from Iran to Bosnia. This, he tells an incredulous Ka, is why Islamists kill. (The Western reader finds himself grasping for parallels—say, Christian terrorists murdering people to restore *Beowulf* to its proper place in the literary canon.)

LIKE THE SECULAR nationalists, the Islamists have little time for Ka's individualism. One of the novel's subplots involves Ka's return to religious belief. An atheist who has written nothing for years, Ka finds poems suddenly coming to him in Kars, and he attributes this creativity to a newfound love for God. Ka has no desire to join the Islamists, though; for him, belief is a solitary matter, a personal relationship with God. The nationalists and Islamists alike dismiss this as Western nonsense. You can't believe in God and live apart from the Islamists, Sunay admonishes Ka: it's either us or them. For his part, Blue mocks Ka's return to faith. "I don't want to destroy your illusions, but your love for God comes out of Western romantic novels. In a place like this, if you worship God as a European, you're bound to be a laughingstock. . . . First try to be like everyone else. Then try to believe in God."

"First try to be like everyone else." The message that comes through *Snow* most clearly is the hostility of the most powerful elements in Turkish society to anything authentically Western, particularly the claims of individual conscience. At the moment, *Snow* suggests, the most powerful people in Turkey are fanatics like Sunay and Blue, and the one thing that unites them is their violent resistance to the values that the West holds most dear. This is a depressing message for those who believe, like Pamuk, that Western values are basically right and that cross-cultural reconciliation is the only way to prevent more violent conflict between our two civilizations. After reading *Snow*, one understands more clearly the awful conditions that "the poor and scorned" of today's Turkey face, including the terrible choice between a brutal nationalism and a murderous Islamism. But one also understands better the difficulties that lie in the way of any real reconciliation between the Western and Muslim worlds.


LOGIA
A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY
on CD
LOGIA is a free conference in print committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.
$15
Shipping & handling included
Volumes I–XII (42 issues)
PDF for PC or Mac
Colored for better screen viewing
Linked—including endnotes—and bookmarked
Indexed for simple and advanced searches
To order, include name, address, phone number and payment by check, money order or Visa/MasterCard.
Phone ❖ 605-887-3145
E-mail ❖ logia2@nvc.net
Fax ❖ 605-887-3129
Mail ❖ 15825 373rd Ave., Northville, SD 57465
Visit our web site at www.logia.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freedom's Surety

AMERICAN PROVIDENCE: A NATION WITH A MISSION
By STEPHEN H. WEBB
Continuum. 173 pp. $22.95.

Reviewed by Jean Bethke Elshtain

PERHAPS STEPHEN WEBB should have added a question mark after the word "mission" in the subtitle of his brisk and engaging book, *American Providence: A Nation with a Mission*. But perhaps he did not need to, as the question mark is assumed. Is God using America to accomplish something special in the world? "Sophisticated people just do not talk that way. The cultural elite dismiss the doctrine of providence as the illusory product of fundamentalist fantasies. Providence is caricatured as a theological version of hide-and-seek."

Webb claims that the effort to discern providence at work in America has given rise sometimes to heresies (such as Manifest Destiny in the nineteenth century), sometimes to distortions (such as "countdown to Armageddon" caricatures in which "history is treated like a secret message"), and often to genuine insights ("One of the tasks of providential America was to serve as a sanctuary for the world's deprived and persecuted. . . ."). In our era of religious terrorism, and especially in the wake of the September 11 attacks, "the relationship between America and Christianity has rarely been so hotly contested" and "we need more than ever a reasonable theological assessment of the role that America, along with its particular brand of Christianity, plays on the world stage."

Webb sketches the genesis and history of "the construction of the idea of America" and argues that we have prematurely abandoned the notion of providence in relation to our own history and our understanding of our purposes. "Instead of repairing the doctrine of providence, which has been so badly abused in the modern world, theologians have more often dedicated themselves to the task of showing how God is not in charge of the world. . . ." Giving up on providence is one way to maximize space for human action. It is much easier to embrace self-sovereignty, even political sovereignty, if God's sovereign power does not hold sway over the fate of nations.

But Webb hopes "to demonstrate the necessity of providence for three interrelated issues. First, I argue that political theology as such requires the doctrine of providence. Second, I argue that American history cannot be understood apart from this doctrine. Third, I insist that any theological analysis of nationalism, globalism, and the future of the church requires a strong grasp of providence." Further, he insists, a "providential reading of world history must account for America's miraculous rise to world power, and it must give an interpretation of God's blessings for America as well as America's responsibilities for those blessings."

This is a tall order, and Webb acknowledges that he is scratching the surface of a hugely complex set of questions and problems. But his reflections are provocative, bold, and helpful in situating certain problems. For example, we know that the American framers saw providence at work in America's coming-to-be and her future tasks. We know that "Lincoln was tortured by reflection on the transcendental meaning of the American experiment"; he saw us as an "almost chosen people" whose democracy was the "last, best hope" of earth; and he was convinced that God's hand was at work in the visitation upon America of a terrible civil war.

CAN ANY SUCH VIEW be defended today? Yes, insists Webb, but one must proceed cautiously in articulating the notion of a particular American mission. Webb reminds us that many presidents, including the sitting president, have been convinced that, as President Bush has put it, "God has planted in every heart the desire to live in freedom," and that America is obliged to participate in a political mission consistent with this perduring truth. Yet Webb also cites Robert Bellah approvingly to the effect that "being chosen does not legitimate triumphalism." Webb's aim is thus to chart a course between strong triumphalism and an overly ascetic rendering of America's purposes.

Webb detects behind the denial that God is in charge of things an embrace of "the modern myth that human beings are in control of their own destiny," that we are not under any power save our own, individually and collectively. By contrast, Webb opts for, and defends, a position of chastened providentialism within which providence is felt as a burden that checks triumphalism. Reporting on the self-assured providentialism of our past, Webb notes that this providentialism as a way of understanding the meaning of America has never truly disappeared but has, rather, fragmented. One camp may stress America's mission as a sanctuary for the persecuted, while another may discern a particular and even decisive role for America to play in foreign affairs. Some leaders and thinkers have brought these emphases together, says Webb, as when, throughout World War II, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made "liberal use of providential rhetoric to justify the expansion of government and America's commitment to

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN *is The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago and author of* Just War Against Terror *(Basic Books).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

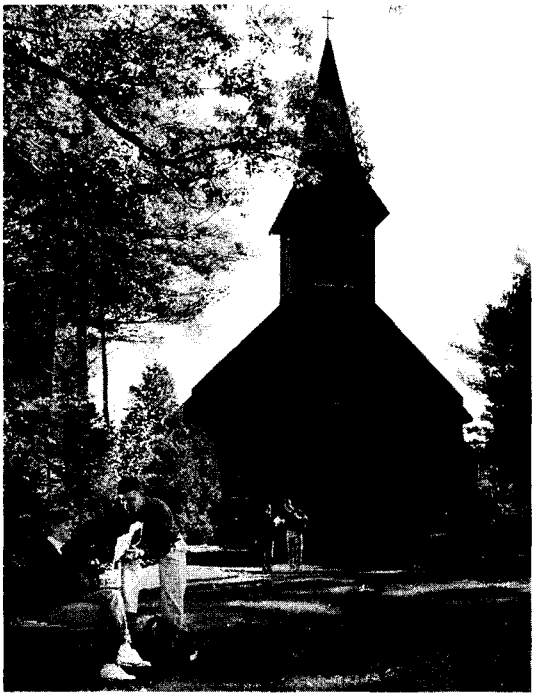
freedom for all." In the past four decades, however, providential readings of our history have either been abandoned altogether or have narrowed almost exclusively to the stress on sanctuary.

What, then, would a revival of providential thinking offer Christians in our post–September 11 world? It would offer them a way of challenging liberal political philosophy's repudiation of any possibility that a "good God can exercise preferential judgments." (By liberal political philosophy, Webb means primarily the ideas of John Rawls.) American Christians, he writes, "know better than to think that the inscrutable ways of providence can be reduced to the idea of fairness." It would offer them an opportunity to recognize themselves as a "nation under judgment" and as gifted (or burdened) with an unusual stewardship to offer democratic possibilities to the world. It would offer them a wider context in which to incorporate the legitimate insights of liberation theology, which are themselves a form of providential thinking: If there is a preferential option for the poor, why not also a preferential option for democracy as the political structure most likely to benefit the poor?

IN WEBB'S CONCLUDING three chapters, he advances a "particular theory of providence" that goes beyond generic or general notions of providence as "God's regular mode of operating in the world. . . ." For Webb, God's providence is always and everywhere "special and particular, not regular and general." A classical doctrine of providence possesses the undeniable virtue of avoiding what Webb recognizes as the extremes of "humanizing God by making God an agent like us . . . or dehumanizing God by portraying God as the immediate cause of every event." The opening into considerations of particular providence in political life is through the concept of political authority—a concept that also needs to be revised by new theological thinking.

Webb insists that Christianity is, in many profound ways, a political religion. Christianity helped to plant the seeds of democracy, whose fruit is freedom. Do not Christians, then, have a stake in the fate of systems that honor human dignity and human freedom? Webb insists that only if we reach deep into our theological past can we deal with the challenges of the present and future, including the challenge of Islamism. The

A distinctive Catholic college with a special mission



Magdalen offers a challenging, classical liberal arts education that integrates intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual development. The College provides a rigorous educational experience carefully designed to prepare you for life, and for living it well! Come visit us at our beautiful rural campus, or online at **www.magdalen.edu**

Magdalen College

MAGDALEN COLLEGE

511 Kearsarge Mountain Road
Warner, New Hampshire 03278
603-456-2656
Toll Free 877-498-1723

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christian tradition of self-criticism is a wonder, he tells us, but if self-criticism turns into terminal self-doubt, even self-loathing, then we have a problem. If we scorn the notion that God intends freedom for all his people, including freedom in its political form, then we shall find ourselves helpless, theologically speaking, before determined and ruthless foes of freedom.

WEBB CONCLUDES WITH a rather curious chapter on "Carl Schmitt and the Limits of Democracy," Schmitt being the brilliant critic of liberalism whose life and thought are, as Webb says, "tainted by his impoverished political decision to join the Nazi Party in 1933." Webb, like a number of current writers on law, jurisprudence, and political philosophy, urges that we need to confront Schmitt's "insistence that democracies need an external principle of authority that can bring public debate to an end." Schmitt's view was that democracy could not rise to the challenges of "the exception," those situations in which the system itself is challenged by the unanticipated and horrible, and in which routine procedures do not suffice. If one has collapsed Christianity and democracy into a moralistic, law-governed Kantianism, one may leave one's own society open to dissolution through irresolution. Unlike Schmitt, who locates all value in the political, Webb references Reinhold Niebuhr and René Girard, who "point to the role of theology in limiting the political. . . ." Theology cannot play that role, Webb concludes, without some account of providence.

Webb might have done better to save this discussion of Schmitt for another day. That being said, it remains the case that in *American Providence* Webb has done a commendable job of taking on a huge and controversial subject and presenting it in clear language that alerts us to what is at stake and why we should be engaged. As he writes in concluding the book, "The critics of providence caricature it as an elaborate ruse of self-congratulation, but it is better understood as a form of trust and gratitude that frees the individual for confident action in the world. Freedom would have little meaning if it had no purpose or direction, and it would have little chance in the short run if there were no hope for its ultimate fulfillment. Democracy is a gamble on freedom, and providence is its surety."

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING
An Ongoing Lecture Series at Gordon College

ALAN WOLFE | February 16, 2005
Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Boston College; "The Evangelical Mind: Opened or Closed?"

NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORF | March 18, 2005
Professor Emeritus, Yale University

PHILIP JENKINS | March 31–April 1, 2005
Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies, Penn State University; "Global Christianity and the Future of Liberal Arts Education"

JEREMY BEGBIE | April 4–5, 2005
Associate Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, England
"Thinking Theologically Through the Arts"

ARMAND NICHOLI | April 8, 2005
Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
"The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud"

KENNETH ELZINGA | September 16, 2005
Robert C. Taylor Professor of Economics, University of Virginia
"Called to the Marketplace"

THOMAS KIDD | October 3, 2005
Assistant Professor of History, Baylor University
"Islam in American Protestant Thought"

Gordon College strives to educate individuals distinguished by Christian character and intellectual maturity, willing to serve others and accept leadership roles worldwide.

Gordon College

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Off at College

I AM CHARLOTTE SIMMONS
By TOM WOLFE
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
646 pp. $28.95.

Reviewed by Mary Ann Glendon

WHEN THE HEROINE of *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—a smart, beautiful, small-town girl—sits down to write her mother a letter about freshman life in "Dupont University," it takes her hours to produce a "long, well-intentioned lie." What Charlotte Simmons can't bring herself to reveal, author Tom Wolfe has already spelled out in several hundred pages of details that add up to a parent's worst nightmare.

So graphic is Wolfe's skillful portrayal of binge drinking, foul language, academic dishonesty, and predatory sex on an elite college campus that it is hard to imagine that many readers will actually enjoy this book. Even the partying scenes are joyless, more in the mood of a canvas by Bosch than one by Brueghel. Within days of the novel's publication, a host of reviewers had insisted—a bit too stridently—that there was not much to learn from this extended exposure of the seamy side of college life. Some thought it exaggerated, and some faulted Wolfe for laboring what everyone already knows: students drink, cheat, and have sex; professors and administrators have agendas. So what?

To this parent and educator, it seems that Wolfe's four years of research enabled the satirist to produce a credible composite portrayal of a young woman's struggle to hold on to, and develop, her sense of self in an environment where professors treat such concepts as "self" and "soul" as illusions, and where young people are left almost completely free to act on their most primitive impulses. In addition to dramatizing Charlotte's immersion in this world, Wolfe also explores the parallel difficulties experienced by three very different male students as they try to figure out what it is to be a man. For anyone who still hopes that college is a place where young men and women are helped to learn how to make decisions wisely and well, this book will be profoundly unsettling. Not only have institutions of higher education decisively rejected the role of *in loco parentis*, but they are increasingly populated by children whose parents have abdicated their own responsibility.

Tom Wolfe was drawn to the subject of university life, he told an interviewer, when he realized that college has "more and more replaced the church as the source of new values, of new ethical outlooks." Though conceding that "sex, booze, and status" have always been part of the college scene, Wolfe declared that the contemporary situation is different in that, "with a few exceptions, universities have totally abandoned the idea of strengthening character, and this enormous change" seems to have been "hardest on young women."

IN *Charlotte Simmons*, one finds all the features that have made Wolfe one of the greatest contemporary North American novelists: a plot that drives at breakneck speed through a major culture-shaping institution, an array of flawed yet yearning characters tested to the limits of their endurance, and startlingly authentic dialogue. Wolfe shows again why he has been compared to Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, and Zola. But in this book Wolfe has stretched the form of the novel in a way that invites comparison with novelists such as Albert Camus and Walker Percy, who explored in their fiction (as well as in essays) the ways in which modern

MARY ANN GLENDON *is the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University and president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.*

Did you know that 99.9% of the books ever published are now out-of-print?

Of course, most books ought to be out-of-print. They weren't very good when they were first published; they haven't gotten any better with age.

But did you know that most of the books by most of the great philosophers, theologians and religious writers of the Christian tradition are also out-of-print?

Here are some examples:

1. *John Henry Newman (1801-1890). 126 volumes of his writings have been published (including the critical edition of his letters and diaries); only 22 of these volumes are still in print.*

2. *Karl Barth (1886-1968), not less than 241 different books on the life or thought of Barth have been published; only 16 of these are still in print.*

3. *Charles Williams (1886-1945: "inkling"). 43 volumes by him were published during his lifetime; 38 are out of print.*

Where does one find these out-of-print books?

Loome
Theological Booksellers
320 North Fourth Street
Stillwater, Mn 55082
Phone: 651-430-1092
Fax: 651-439-8504
e-mail: books@loomebooks.com
Website: www.loomebooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

philosophy and science have unsettled our understanding of what it means to be human.

Wolfe has chapters set in the neuroscience classroom interspersed among chapters tracing the social and personal lives of Charlotte and her friends, and by this device Wolfe probes deeply into the nature of personal identity, free will, and the relation between the mind and the brain. What does it mean to say "I am Charlotte Simmons" when the Charlotte Simmons who has spent a year at Dupont University is in many ways not the same person whose parents left her there the previous fall? Wolfe's unobtrusive allusions to the literature on cognitional theory show that he has done his homework.

WE FIRST MEET Charlotte Simmons on the eve of her departure from Sparta, North Carolina, where, as a gifted student, she had felt rather isolated from (and superior to) her high school classmates. Her scholarship to renowned Dupont University will enable her, she thinks, "to find people like herself, people who actually have a life of the mind."

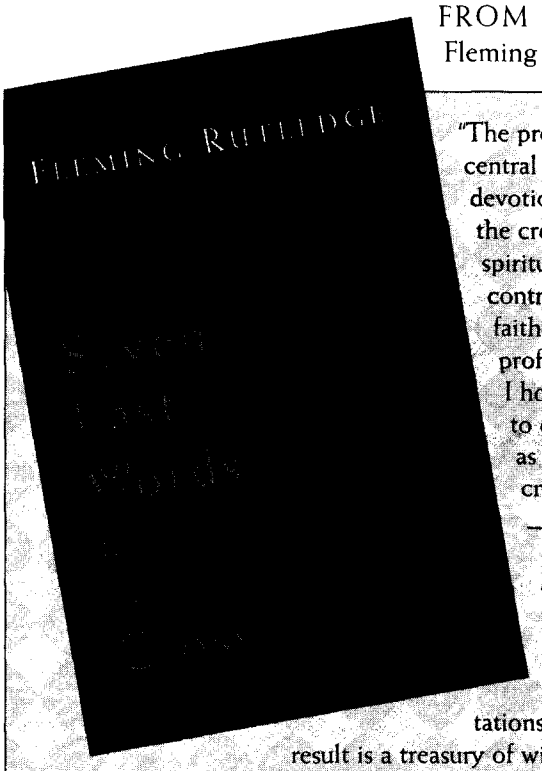
Instead, she finds profound loneliness and, even worse, a drastic loss of privacy. Back in Sparta, when adolescent boys strayed beyond the bounds of acceptable behavior, older men nudged them back into line. But in the co-ed bathroom of her dorm, Charlotte gets her first glimpse of a world where normal restraints on language and conduct have been suspended.

What Charlotte can't bear to tell her mother is that there is no privacy *anywhere* at Dupont, including the room she shares with snooty, Groton-educated Beverly. Affluent and already initiated in vice, Beverly is quickly accepted into Dupont's popular set. In the kind of letter Charlotte wishes she could write, she imagines crying out the truth: "[Beverly] brings boys into bed—and they rut-rut-rut *do it*—barely four feet from my bed! She leads a wanton sex life! The whole place does! . . . Right in front of you! Momma—what am I to do . . . ?"

With no one to talk to, Charlotte feels a loneliness so deep that it is almost tangible: "It wasn't merely that she had no friends. She didn't even have a sanctuary in which she could be simply alone." For a while, successes in the classroom carry her through. She tries to tell herself: "Charlotte Simmons was above them all. They were specimens for her to study." She recalls her mother's parting words about how to deal

A Book *for* Lenten Reading

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS
Fleming Rutledge



"The proclamation of the cross is central to Christian faith just as devotion to and solidarity with the cross are central to Christian spirituality. Fleming Rutledge contributes immensely to both faith and spirituality in this profound and moving book. I hope that it will help many to deepen their commitment as companions of Christ crucified."
— KENNETH LEECH

"Fleming Rutledge brings a profound knowledge of the atoning work of Christ to bear on a series of meditations for God's people. The result is a treasury of wisdom on the cross of Christ. I will continue to read this little book."
— RICHARD LISCHER

ISBN 0-8028-2786-1 · 96 pages · paperback · $12.00

at your bookstore,
800-253-7521
eerdmans.com

4576 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with people who try to push you into things you don't want to do: "All you got to say is, 'I'm Charlotte Simmons, and I don't hold with things like 'at.' And they'll respect you for that."

But a part of Charlotte begins to long for acceptance by her peers and even for popularity. In what must surely rank as one of the most squalid seduction scenes in literature, Charlotte's Spartan self-confidence is overcome by a combination of alcohol, a handsome frat boy's flattery, and her own ambivalent yearnings to be noticed and envied. Disasters follow thick and fast. In full view of others, Charlotte is humiliated, degraded, and dumped by the caddish Hoyt. As the story spreads around campus, she slides into depression, unable to eat, sleep, or face going to class. Christmas break brings further torment rather than relief, because she now feels estranged even from her family. She can't enter into their festivities, nor can she respond to her mother's anxious questions about what's troubling her.

Charlotte's recovery from depression involves finding a friend at last. The nerdy, intellectual Adam helps to nurse her back to health. He is smitten with Charlotte, but she is no longer the girl who was hoping to find a soul mate with whom to share the life of the mind. A clever girl after all, she is figuring out how to master the Dupont system. When Adam himself needs support, she is just too busy. Her own sense of herself has become increasingly bound up with how she appears in the eyes of others. When a basketball star in a jam seeks her advice, she is happy to oblige, but she is so intent on being noticed in his company that she barely hears what he has to say. ("She sure hoped Lucy Page and Gloria got a load of Jojo's anxious body language.")

Charlotte gradually gets back on the academic track, but too late to save her first semester grades. The excuses she offers her parents for her poor performance are lame. Momma, who is no fool, tells her daughter, "Sounds to me like what you need right now is a talk with your own soul, an honest talk."

The evolving Charlotte thinks about that advice now and then. Her neuroscience professor says that words like "soul" have no meaning. And yet, "Why do you keep waiting deep in the back of my head, Momma, during my every conscious moment—waiting for me to have that conversation?" What does it mean, she fleetingly wonders, to say, "I am Charlotte Sim-

BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR FAITH AND LEARNING
2005 PRUIT MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, November 10—Saturday, November 12, 2005

Plenary Speakers

David Bebbington, University of Stirling; Baylor University
Paul Freston, Calvin College
Mark Noll, Wheaton College
Dana Robert, Boston University
Lamin Sanneh, Yale University
Brian Stanley, University of Cambridge

Program Description

Christian movements continue to exert significant influence, not only in North America, but increasingly in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia. The growth of world Christianity since the eighteenth century has confounded conventional expectations of modernity and secularization, challenged the centrality of the "West" in traditional narratives of Christianity, and presented an intriguing religious aspect of the postmodern condition. In light of these developments, this international symposium will gather historians, political scientists, sociologists, theologians, and others to discuss past manifestations and future trends of global Christianity. We are particularly interested in Christianity's worldwide growth and its relationship to modernity/postmodernity, and Christianity's relationship to secularization, colonization, decolonization, nationalism, internationalism, and globalization.

This announcement invites paper proposals for concurrent sessions.
Besides individual papers, session proposals on specific topics, questions, or recent books are welcomed. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

• Missions and imperialism/colonization • Missions and cultural resistance
• Christianity and cultural identities • Religious sources of nationalism
• Indigenous Christianities • Religious and economic globalization
• Communication technologies and global Christianity • Cultural meanings of conversion
• Trans-national theological and political alliances • Cross-cultural evangelistic strategies
• Supernaturalism and "Enlightenment" in global perspective • Charismatic renewal
• Christian encounters with other faiths • World Christianity and political activism
• Non-Western influences on Western Christianity's thought and practices
• World Christianity's engagement with ideologies of class, gender and race

Abstracts of 250-500 words should be submitted by May 15, 2005, and include title, name of author(s), institutional affiliation and position, mailing address, and e-mail address. Please send by mail to

BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR FAITH AND LEARNING • ONE BEAR PLACE #97270 • WACO, TX 76798-7270
Send e-mail to IFL@baylor.edu. See www.baylor.edu/IFL for further details.
BAYLOR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mons"? Wolfe leaves the reader wondering, too.

What he does not leave in doubt in this morally serious work is the powerful influence that environment can exert upon young men and women at crucial formative stages in their journey through life. The point is lifted up in a prefatory note, ostensibly drawn from the capsule biography of a Dupont professor, describing the experiments that won him fame. There we learn that when Dr. Starling removed the amygdala from the brains of laboratory cats, he observed them "to veer helplessly from one inappropriate affect to another, boredom where there should be fear, cringing where there should be preening, sexual arousal where there was nothing that would stimulate an intact animal." More surprising was what happened next: when intact "control" cats were exposed to the altered cats, they too began attempting indiscriminately to copulate with any object they encountered. Starling became celebrated for his discovery "that a strong social or 'cultural' atmosphere . . . could in time overwhelm the genetically determined responses of perfectly normal, healthy animals."

Because environments do influence the decisions and actions by which we constitute ourselves as one kind of person or another, this book should be mandatory reading for those who may like it least—mothers and fathers of college-bound young men and women. If it is as widely read and discussed as it deserves to be, *I Am Charlotte Simmons* will at least encourage parents to ask more searching questions during the recruitment process, and to make informed choices among educational institutions. It may even prompt some soul-searching on the part of those who set policy in colleges and universities.

Prepare for the New Evangelization
Enroll in the first STL of its kind in the U.S.
Embrace the Holy Father's vision for a "New Evangelization" by enrolling in Sacred Heart Major Seminary's new Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL).
• First STL that specializes in pastoral theology focused on the New Evangelization
• For the entire Body of Christ: Priests, religious, laity
• Contemporary cultural analysis, theology and spirituality
• Expert faculty includes Dr. Janet Smith, Fr. Francis Martin, Mr. Ralph Martin
• MA Theology/MA Pastoral Studies concentrations in the New Evangelization
• Financial aid and housing available
These innovative programs prepare highly trained graduates to lead efforts in evangelization in a parish or diocese, or in a teaching ministry.
SACRED HEART MAJOR SEMINARY
2701 Chicago Boulevard
Detroit, Michigan 48206
Call for an information pack 313-883-8520
Learn more at www.shmsonline.org

Roland Redivivus

ORLANDO INNAMORATO
(ORLANDO IN LOVE)
By MATTEO MARIA BOIARDO
Translated by
CHARLES STANLEY ROSS
Parlor. 717 pp. $40.

Reviewed by David B. Hart

ORLANDO (OR ROLAND, as he was originally called), the greatest paladin of the (mythic) court of Charlemagne, once loomed in the consciousness of Western culture at least as large as any of King Arthur's knights. He began his (extant) literary adventures in perhaps the late tenth century, in the *Chanson de Roland*, as a gallant, formidable, intrepid, rash, and somewhat foolish *chevalier* who is betrayed by his stepfather Ganelon and—along with the whole company of the rearguard of Charlemagne's retreat from Spain—dies in an ambush by Muslim "paynims" in a pass of the Eastern Pyrenees, at Roncevaux (Roncesvalles). Behind that story, it seems, stands a real historical personage: we know that a certain Count Rotholandus was among the courtiers of Charlemagne in the year 772, and in Einhard's *Vita Karoli* the story of the death of "Hruolandus" is recounted for the first time. If nothing else, the ambuscade at Roncesvalles—traditionally dated August 15, 778—did take place, though it was perpetrated by Basques, not Moors.

In later *chansons de geste*, however—such as *Les Quatre Filz Aymon*, *Enfances Roland*, and *Entrée en Espagne*—the details of Roland's earlier life were filled in, with a variety of fanciful elements becoming ever more prominent features of the narrative, and it was not long before the real Roland (such as he was) had all but disappeared behind the more

DAVID B. HART *is an Eastern Orthodox theologian and author of* The Beauty of the Infinite *(Eerdmans).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resplendent figure of the hero of legend. And as the adventures of this hero grew in number and improbability, he was joined along the way by other Carolingian peers who would, in time, acquire legends of their own (Renaus, for instance—or Renaud, Ranaldo, Rinaldo, etc.—ultimately went on to rival Roland not only in martial proficiency but in literary popularity). And Roland and his fellow paladins soon migrated into other tongues: into the German of the *Ruolandes Liet*, into Spanish tales of the exploits of "Roldan," into the English of such romances as *Sir Ferumbras* and *Roland and Ferragus*, and, most crucially, into Italian.

This last language proved especially hospitable to Orlando (as he was now known); in no other would his fortunes fare quite so magnificently well. Dante, for instance, not only placed Ganelon (or Ganellone) in the lowest circle of hell, but in the *Paradiso* counted Orlando among eight great warrior martyrs who shine with a ruby incandescence in the firmament of the sphere of Mars. And it was in Italian that Orlando ultimately achieved his apotheosis as the supreme hero of chivalric fiction, in the three greatest Italian romances of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: the *Morgante* of Luigi Pulci, the *Orlando Innamorato* of Matteo Boiardo, and the *Orlando Furioso* of Ludovico Ariosto. In these immense, fantastic, intricate, and bizarre epics, the figure of Orlando came at last to assume literary dimensions such as no other warrior of Christendom could ever hope to equal.

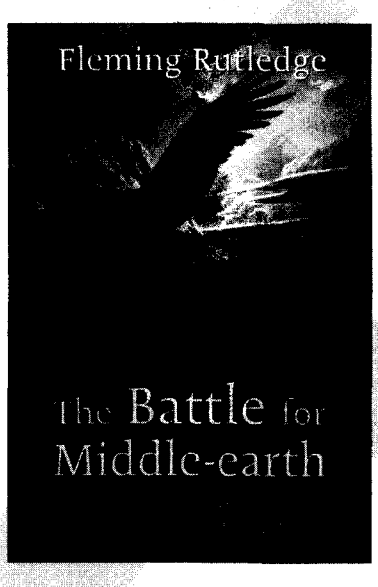
Today, however, Orlando's fame seems to have sunk to its lowest ebb. Certainly the legends of the Carolingian peers do not continue to generate popular literature and film in the way that the stories of Camelot do. Perhaps this is simply because the court of Charlemagne, even in fable, occupies too specific a place in history. Orlando is, unambiguously, a champion of an imperiled Christendom; his stories certainly cannot be resituated (in the manner of contemporary Arthuriana) in a realm of fatuous New Age pantheism. But, whatever the cause, Orlando—especially in the English-speaking world—is all but forgotten. Of the three great epics, only Ariosto's tends to enjoy a distinct presence in literate minds, and then usually only as a book lurking unread upon some rarely visited shelf.

IT WAS NOT EVER THUS. Once these works were part of the common heritage of European culture and exercised an immense literary influence. Without the great Italian romances, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, for instance, would not have been written. When Milton in *Paradise Lost* mentions the siege of Albraca—described in the *Innamorato*—he is not doing so as a display of abstruse erudition. Indeed, it would be difficult to exaggerate how deeply these epics entered into the imaginative world of English literature (especially in the Romantic period). In Bulfinch's *Legends of Charlemagne*, published in 1867, the author blandly and uncontentiously numbers these works "among the most cherished creations of human genius," some knowledge of which "is expected of every well-educated young person." And yet by 1936 C. S. Lewis could only lament that these "masterpieces" were now so neglected and that all of us had been robbed of the enjoyment of "one of the great trophies of the European genius."

This, though, may be a propitious moment for a revival of interest in these works, at least among Anglophone readers. For the first time ever, complete translations of all three of the Orlando epics are available, and at reasonable prices. The *Furioso* has been rendered into English on a number of occasions, but by far the most delightful modern version is

Fleming Rutledge
The Battle for Middle-earth
Tolkien's Divine Design in THE LORD OF THE RINGS

"Fleming Rutledge writes about the moral and theological life of *The Lord of the Rings* with immense verve and insight. Rutledge inhabits the world of Middle-earth from the inside, linking the characters who play out its cosmic drama with the narrative world of Scripture, showing how they have the power both to illuminate our times and to transform our lives."
— RALPH C. WOOD



ISBN 0-8028-2497-8
· 381 pages
· paperback
· $20.00

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

3567 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

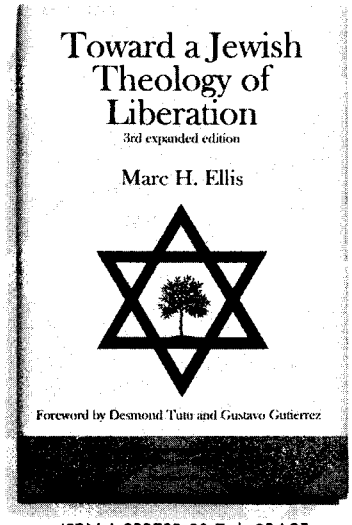
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that of Barbara Reynolds. The first complete translation of the *Morgante*, by Joseph Tusiani, appeared in 1998. And now, with this release of Charles Stanley Ross' translation of the *Innamorato* (revising an earlier version that appeared in a limited and hideously expensive critical edition), the entire Orlando cycle lies at our fingertips. And, given that the *Furioso* is the completion of the *Innamorato* (left unfinished at Boiardo's death), readers who have not mastered the dialects of Renaissance Italy can now enjoy the whole narrative arc of these two linked epics without resorting to abridgments.

There is something slightly subversive in the title of Boiardo's epic. The early *chansons de geste* were works notorious for their martial austerity, and were largely devoid of whimsy, extravagant invention, or any trace of romantic love (as Boiardo at one point coyly notes). Pulci had introduced certain vaguely "Arthurian" elements into the Carolingian mythos; but it was Boiardo who first explicitly united the two streams of lore, importing into his poem not only one of the relics of Merlin and various dimensions of the magical and the "fay," but an emphasis upon human love.

One's first encounter with any of these epics can be somewhat jarring; they are far and away the most wildly farraginous and gloriously irresponsible masterpieces in Western literature. They are at once heroic, comic, allegorical, lyrical, satirical, fabulous, and (occasionally) dark; they move with alarming ease between the metaphysical and the ribald, the allegorical and the brutal, the spiritual and the grotesque. The *Innamorato* might almost seem formless but for the ingenuity with which Boiardo continually weaves the innumerable strands of his story together into ever more diverting designs. At any moment in the story, a paladin might find himself confronted by a giant Saracen astride a galloping giraffe, or trapped in an enchanted castle oblivious of his own name, or beset by an army of demons, or challenged by an ogre, or lost in a fairy otherworld full of the most exquisite enchantments, or at the mercy of a sorcerer. And Boiardo—even more than Ariosto—is so irrepressibly inventive a fabulist that one often has the feeling that, but for the author's mortality, the story need never come to an end.

There is, however, a larger plot to the poem, wherein all of its disparate elements and wild divarications find their home. It begins at a Pentecost


Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation
3rd expanded edition
Marc H. Ellis
Foreword by Desmond Tutu and Gustavo Gutierrez

ISBN 1-932792-00-7 | $34.95
6 x 9, 278 pages | Cloth

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation *is a fascinating and original reconfiguration of some of the most hotly debated political and religious topics today.*

– SUSANNAH HESCHEL

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation

Foreword by Desmond Tutu and Gustavo Gutiérrez

MARC H. ELLIS

Ellis' use of liberation theology to make connections between the Holocaust and contemporary communities from the Third World reminds both Jews and oppressed Christians that they share common ground in the experiences of abandonment, suffering, and death. According to Ellis, Jews and Christians must never allow the reality of anti-Semitism to become an excuse for evading solidarity with the oppressed peoples—be they African, Asian, Latin American or, especially, Palestinian.

baylorpress.com | 1.800.710.3217

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tournament called by Charlemagne, for Christian and Muslim knights alike, which is interrupted by the arrival of Angelica, a woman of astonishing beauty who offers herself as the prize to any knight who can defeat her brother upon the field of battle. (She is, we later learn, the daughter of the King of Cathay and mistress of certain magic arts, sent with the express purpose of bringing ruin upon the emperor's court.) The assembled warriors are smitten with her at once, none more hopelessly than Orlando, and are willing to venture anything to win her. When she is forced to flee back to Asia, she is followed by Orlando, who is himself followed in turn by other paladins.

An additional comic twist is given to the tale when, wandering in the forest of Arden, Ranaldo—also pursuing Angelica—drinks from Merlin's well (prepared long ago to chill Tristan's ardor for Isolde), which turns his love for Angelica to hatred; but then Angelica drinks from the Stream of Love and falls slavishly in love with Ranaldo. Thus, when she has returned home, she contrives to have Ranaldo spirited away to the Far East upon a magic ship. Finally—by way of innumerable detours—a host of players, Christian and "pagan," are brought together at the city of Albraca, where Angelica is besieged by her jealous suitor Agricane of Tartary, and where Orlando and Ranaldo find themselves fighting on opposite sides.

In the second book of the epic, however, the action shifts back towards the West. Albraca falls and Angelica escapes with Orlando. Meanwhile, the Muslim kings of North Africa launch an assault on Charlemagne's empire. The earlier comic twist is twisted again when Angelica and Ranaldo drink from (respectively) Merlin's well and the Stream of Love, and so exchange the spells under which they labor. And the involutions of plot become if anything more elaborate than in the first half of the poem. The Muslim invasion of France and siege of Paris occupy the rest of the epic, and are still in progress when it abruptly terminates. Among the new characters are Rodamonte ("Rodomonte" in Ariosto, whence the word "rodomontade"), the fierce, godless, and all but invincible Saracen king of Sarza, and Rugiero, the mythical progenitor of the House of Este. The latter is especially important because Boiardo—gentleman of Ferrara—was a beneficiary of the Estensi; and because Ariosto—also dependent on that House's patronage—would explicitly transform Ruggiero (Ariosto's spelling) into the Ferraran Aeneas, and Rodomonte into a new Turnus (which gives Rodomonte the privilege of bringing the epic to its sudden conclusion by dying under Ruggiero's blade).

BOIARDO HAS OFTEN been dismissed as Ariosto's inferior, and in many respects he is (though not in fertility of imagination). One charge too often laid against him, though, is that his characters are not consistently developed. It is true that he does not provide much in the way of "psychological" portraiture; but one of the astonishing things about the *Innamorato* is how clearly his men and women stand forth in one's imagination. Despite the mythic scale of their prowess, the human dimensions of their personalities are almost always poignantly visible. It is difficult to convey how touching, for instance, the character of Orlando is in some respects: especially his utter naïveté regarding—and childlike faith in—women (the very characteristic that will lead, in Ariosto's epic, to the madness that gives the poem its title). And certain characters—like Astolfo, the impossibly brave if somewhat inept English paladin, or the "pagan" (later Christian) paramours Brandimarte and Fiordelisa—are rendered as vividly as any figures in epic fiction.

All the Orlando epics are marvelous works, and the whole cycle is like nothing else in the Western canon. Though Ariosto's poem introduces undeniably tragic themes into the story, and though Pulci retells the story of Roncesvalles, none of these poems is tragic in the classical sense; and they certainly display little of the grave grandeur of classical epic. They are the imaginative product of late Christendom at the threshold of modernity, an exorbitant flourishing of the riches of a fully formed and complex civilization. Like Elizabethan drama, they are so heterogeneous in form as practically to constitute a rebellion against classical restraints; they simply cannot resist mixing intense pathos with high comedy, stateliness with farce, heroic magnificence with nursery fantasy. These are joyous books, festive, pervaded by a spirit of carnival and of rude happiness; they contain no hint of morbid fatalism; they cannot conceal their mirth. (Even the bloodshed is somehow lighthearted.) If Dante's *Commedia* is the consummation of the high culture of developed Christendom, these works represent the final triumph of the sort of worldly imagination incubated by the Christian order (which is so much more fanciful than the pagan).

Ross' translation of the *Innamorato* is not always exemplary. Boiardo was a "rougher" poet than Ariosto, true, but Ross is sometimes far too colloquial; and often the delicate glitter of Boiardo's genuinely lyric passages is rendered by Ross in a pale gray wash. He confines himself, for some reason, to a tetrametric line that is needlessly curt. But his is a scrupulous and readable translation, and (most importantly) it is complete. For this we must be grateful. Only a sensibility in some part stillborn, it seems to me, could fail to delight in these books. One does not so much read them as feast upon them; and it is our very great good fortune that now, for the first time in the history of our language, the feast has been laid for us in full.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Muffling the Clash

THE UNIVERSAL HUNGER FOR LIBERTY: WHY THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS IS NOT INEVITABLE
By MICHAEL NOVAK
Basic. 281 pp. $26.

Reviewed by Lawrence A. Uzzell

POLITICAL FREEDOM remains alien to most of the world's Muslims, in both theory and practice. It would be good for that to change, because political freedom is a universal good which should be universally embraced. Such a change will not come, and will not endure, unless it is principled and voluntary; it cannot be forced from abroad. American politicians have less ability than they think to push global Islam toward freedom—though they have considerable power to foul things up by discrediting freedom among Afghanis and Iraqis as they already have among Russians. But perhaps some immigrant teenager in Detroit will grow up to become the Islamic equivalent of John Courtney Murray, crafting a persuasive theology of freedom within his own tradition and inspiring his coreligionists worldwide.

One wonders what such a teenager would think of Michael Novak's *The Universal Hunger for Liberty*. One hopes that he would appreciate Novak's tactful irenicism and would welcome this invitation to revive the long-dead dialogue of a millennium ago, when Plato and Aristotle were better known to Islam than to Western Christendom. Novak recognizes that Islam will never develop a culture of freedom unless it builds a theological foundation for that culture with its own "magnificent intellectual resources." He warns against despair but does not always avoid wishful thinking.

Unfortunately, the late-medieval Islamic world so decisively rejected its own great commentators on the ancient Greek philosophers that it is almost impossible to imagine that intellectual tradition being revived today. Novak would have done well to note that most of the philosophical commentaries of Averroes, so beloved of Thomas Aquinas, have not even been preserved in their original Arabic; they survive today only in Hebrew or Latin translations. Anyone seeking to build an Islamic theology of freedom today is going to have to base it on the living tradition, including not only the Koran but also the *hadith*, or sayings, attributed to Mohammed and used as spiritual guidelines down to the present. That work can be done successfully only by thinkers who live and pray within that tradition—not by outsiders or heretics. Islamic equivalents of Hans Küng will find it easier to attract Western audiences and funding than to convert their fellow Muslims.

SENSITIVE TO HIS STATUS as an outsider, Novak steps gingerly. He looks for points of classic Islamic doctrine that seem to offer potential for development into a mature theory of freedom—dormant seeds that may someday blossom into "a delayed springtime for worldwide Islam." Among these, he suggests, are Islam's great stress on the dignity of all men and their fundamental equality before God. Also noteworthy is the sense of Allah as so utterly transcendent "that his greatness is a warning to any mere mortal spokesman about his own shortsightedness and inadequacy in the face of Allah. In other words, the greatness of Allah relativizes all known pretensions. It opens the human mind to the possibility that only Allah knows all the paths that lead to him and that human agents would do well to respect the freedom of religious conscience both in single individuals and in the public free exercise of other religious groups. For Muslims, Islam is the one true religion, but no single Muslim can claim to know all the mysterious paths along which Allah leads all the other peoples of the Earth."

More concretely, Novak sees hope in the Islamic tradition of *shura*, by which a ruler is supposed to seek

LAWRENCE A. UZZELL *is president of International Religious Freedom Watch,* http://www.irfw.org.

A Must Read series of books about sex addiction that contain principles that apply to all addictions.

"How To Stay Away From Lust One Day At a Time" is a compelling series of books that uses the first book of Moses, Genesis, in its focus on lust. The series transfuses a spiritual awakening to anyone whose life is affected by compulsive sexual behavior and is searching for ways to deal with it.

If you suffer from any addiction and believe in the power of prayer this new series can profoundly improve your life.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER
ORDER VOLUME 1 FOR ONLY $9.95 + $3. S. & H.

800-380-3704

VOLUMES 1-4 $49.95 + $4.00 S & H

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Use Your Credit Card or send your check or money order to:
Emmet L. Billroy Publishers, Dept. FT
Suite 300 PMB 741• 2711 Centerville Rd. Wilmington, DE 19808
Visit our web site at www.billroy.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consultation and consensus before acting. This, too, might provide a germ of democratic theory—but *shura* has been around for a long time without producing much more real democracy in practice than Russia's analogously named "soviets." Another precedent, often cited by today's Muslim reformers, is the "constitution of Medina," by which Mohammed himself set up a government based on explicit written consent and the granting of civic freedoms to both Muslims and non-Muslims, including Jews.

This very early pact should indeed be better known—but to me it looks like a mere tactic, a temporary accommodation until the prophet and his followers could gather enough strength to crush the infidels and turn them into permanent second-class citizens. It would be tremendously reassuring to see a concrete example of an overwhelmingly Islamic society with a tiny, powerless minority that enjoys reliable freedom of conscience purely because of that society's principled commitment to liberty—a minority such as the Amish in Pennsylvania or Virginia. But so far no such example exists. As measured by human-rights indices such as those of Freedom House, the planet's forty-seven Muslim-majority countries have less freedom than any other major part of the world—less even than sub-Saharan Africa. The Islamic world has never repudiated its many wars of religious aggression, including those led by Mohammed himself, in the way that Christian leaders have offered public repentance for the Crusades.

Even more dubious is the question Novak poses to Muslims: "Does human freedom make us more like God—that is, if any comparison with God, no matter of what kind, is not blasphemous?" I cannot imagine a faithful Muslim seeing such a comparison as anything other than blasphemous. For Christians, deification is the obverse of incarnation; as St. Athanasios said sixteen centuries ago, "The Son of God became man so that we might become god." Islam would seem to be required by its core principles to deny that—and also to deny the New Testament distinction between duties to God and duties to Caesar, which is the basis for all subsequent thought in Christendom on relations between church and state.

Indeed, the most pacific and tolerant Muslims are generally those who have practiced, or have submitted to, the very thing that serious Christians resist when it is done to their own tra-

SUMMER SCRIPTURE SEMINAR 2005

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS: YESTERDAY, TODAY, FOREVER

The Archdiocese of Chicago will convene the 32nd meeting of the Summer Scripture Seminar at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL on June 12-17, 2005. The seminar will reflect on the varied strands of contemporary Scripture scholarship, and explore the many ways the Spirit speaks to us..

Prof. Pauline Viviano
Interpreting the Bible in the Church over the Centuries

Rev. John Lodge
The Role of the Reader and the Meaning of Scripture

Prof. John J. Collins
The Old Testament in Postmodern Perspective

Rev. William Kurz, S.J.
Recovering Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture

Dr. Mary Deeley
Resident Scholar

The Seminar will include a panel discussion on The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship on the evening of Thursday, June 16th. Dr. Diane Bergant, C.S.A., Professor of Old Testament at Catholic Theological Union, and Dr. C. Colt Anderson, Assistant Professor of Church History at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, will join Rev. William Kurz, S.J., and moderator Dr. Mary Deeley.

For information contact:
Ongoing Formation for Ministry
P.O. Box 1979
Chicago, IL 60690-1979
Telephone: 312-236-7543
ofim@archdiocesechicago.org

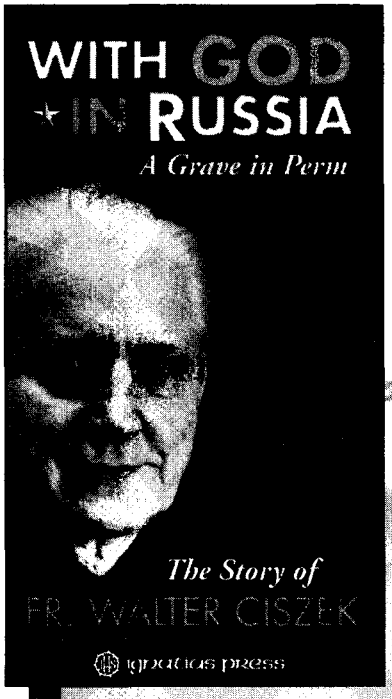
Cooperative venture between OFiM and USML

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dition: the dilution of the tradition by incompatible elements brought in from other religions or from secular culture. The Tatars and Slavs have generally good relations in Tatarstan, but that is impossible to separate from the fact that Tatarstan has been ruled from Moscow for nearly five centuries—and violently secularized during most of the last century. And even extreme secularization has failed to guarantee genuine freedom: for instance, the repressiveness of Turkey's government would get far more critical attention from Washington if Turkey were not an ally of the U.S. and Israel. Precisely because Washington has set such ambitious Wilsonian goals in its "war on terror," it has less scope than it did a decade ago to lobby allied or neutral states on human-rights issues. Uzbekistan's dictator Islam Karimov has clearly calculated that his grotesque persecution of both Muslims and Protestants will not upset his increasingly cozy relations with the U.S. government, and so far he has been right.

Perhaps Washington can do to the Arabs what Moscow did to the Tatars? Novak optimistically calls the March 2004 interim Iraqi constitution "a bright beacon of hope." But that constitution bars enactment of any "law that contradicts the universally agreed tenets of Islam." These tenets include not just metaphysical and ritual teachings but also the *sharia* legal system which lays down detailed rules for both public and private life, including drink and dress. One "universally agreed tenet" prescribes the death penalty for any adult male who converts from Islam to any other religion. By indirectly incorporating such tenets, the constitution gives Islamic clergy a powerful role in the judicial system and in vetoing secular legislation.

That role clearly contradicts the document's Western-style provisions, such as one that ostensibly "guarantees the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice." One member of the committee that drafted the Iraqi constitution reassured his fellow Muslims last year that there would be nothing to prevent a democratically elected government "from practicing Islamic *sharia*." He and many other Iraqis clearly see democracy simply as a mechanism for choosing rulers—not as a broad network of protections for individual freedom and the rule of law. (In general, Novak worries too little about the tension between democracy and freedom; in

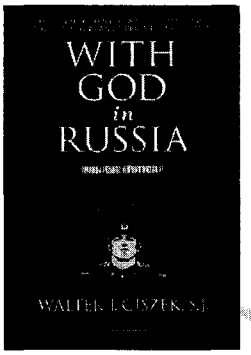


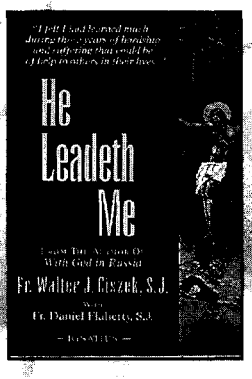
WITH GOD in RUSSIA:
The Story of Fr. Walter Ciszek

WELL KNOWN for his heroic story of surviving 23 years in Russian prison camps, Fr. Walter Ciszek was sent to Poland as a missionary in 1938. Caught between the Nazi invasion coming from the West and the Communist invasion coming from the East, he made his way into Russia, offering secret Masses for the oppressed Catholic population. But soon he was arrested by the KGB, accused of spying, and sent to the Gulag prison system in Siberia. For the next 12 years, there was no word of his whereabouts, or even if he was still alive.

It wasn't until 1963 that Fr. Walter Ciszek was finally allowed to go home to a country that he had not seen for 25 years. His incredible faith and trust in God have made an enormous impact on Catholics in Russia today.

The cause for Fr. Ciszek's canonization was opened in Rome in 1990, and continues to move forward.





Books by **Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J.**
With God in Russia, $14.95
He Leadeth Me, $12.95

Also available on DVD and VHS:
With God in Russia:
The Story of Fr. Walter Ciszek, $19.95

ignatius press
P.O. Box 1339,
Ft. Collins, CO 80522
1-800-651-1531
www.ignatius.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much of the world, more of the former means less of the latter.)

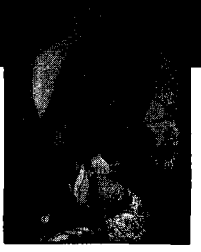
Moreover, it now seems probable that future generations of Iraqis will remember the interim constitution not as an achievement of their own people but as a legacy of alien occupation. One bellwether is the relatively moderate Shiite ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who has largely cooperated with U.S. forces. Sistani has specifically reaffirmed traditional rules forbidding a woman to leave her house without her husband's permission and barring Muslims from bequeathing their estates to non-Muslims. The more "democratic" Iraq's future government becomes in the literal sense of that term—the more accountable to an indigenous popular majority—the more precarious will be its constitutional safeguards for minority and individual rights. The 2004 constitution may turn out to be as meaningless in practice as those which previous generations of democratic optimists drafted for decolonized Africa in the 1960s or the former Soviet republics in the 1990s.

YET FOR ALL THAT, one yearns to reach out to serious Muslims. Traditional Christians ought to feel viscerally uncomfortable about allying ourselves with secular modernists against Muslims; on major issues such as abortion we have more in common with the latter, as Peter Kreeft vividly reminded us in his 1996 book *Ecumenical Jihad.* Decent, civilized men and women from Islamic ethnic groups are well represented in Russia's dissident intelligentsia—such as the surgeon Khassan Baiev, who in his 2003 book *The Oath* gave us the most balanced, humane eyewitness account thus far of the war in Chechnya. A century from now Christian-Muslim coalitions may seem as natural as Christian-Mormon coalitions today. Muslims will have to change a great deal for that to happen, but religions and religious cultures can evolve in unpredictable ways. Who in 1630 would have predicted that Massachusetts, John Winthrop's Calvinist "city on a hill," would become one of the most anti-Christian polities in the Western hemisphere?

Michael Novak, one of the most distinguished Christian scholars of our time, has especially distinguished himself by writing correctives to gloom. His works on Christianity and capitalism and on Christianity and environmentalism—many of the essential points of which he elaborates in *The Universal Hunger for Liberty*—have con-

Light the Path to Holiness . . .

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY



Institute for Pastoral Theology

Master of Theological Studies

A Graduate Program in Pastoral Theology Rooted in the Catholic Tradition, & Designed for the Non-Traditional Student

Our Commitment:

- Theological Education – Formation of Mind
- Spiritual Formation – Conversion of Heart
- Pastoral Orientation – Prudential Wisdom

Foundational Texts:

- Sacred Scripture
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- *Writings of Pope John Paul II*
- Documents of Vatican II
- 1983 Code of Canon Law
- Catholic Liturgical Documents
- *Classics of Catholic Spirituality*

Format:

- One weekend a month
- August – May
- Three-year cycle

Now Accepting Fall 2005 Applications

For classes at these sites:

St. Louis, MO

Naples, FL

Green Bay, WI

Application Deadline: May 16, 2005

1025 Commons Circle, Naples, FL 34119

Toll Free: 866-866-1100 *Fax:* 239-280-2527

Email: ipt@avemaria.edu *Web:* www.ipt.avemaria.edu

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

founded the postmodern cultists of despair and have left all of us in his debt. But his new book, like much current thinking in Washington, is so naïvely optimistic about the prospects for universalizing American-style democracy that it borders on utopianism. Christians should understand that even if the global victory of freedom were inevitable, it would still turn out to be only temporary; original sin would ensure that. In both East and West, fallen men are so constructed that they do not always and everywhere hunger even for universal goods.

Is This Call For You?

The Benedictine Monastic Life Intern Program at Portsmouth Abbey is a unique opportunity to live and learn about monastic life, teach classes and consider the possibility that ***This Call May Be For You.***

Experience the well-balanced life of a Benedictine monk, including daily common prayer, spiritual reading, work and time for rest and exercise in a beautiful seaside location on the shores of Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island.

If you are a college educated, single, Catholic man, aged 20-50, you are invited to apply for our 10-week teaching internship at Portsmouth Abbey School, the nation's leading coeducational Catholic Benedictine boarding school.

Call Dan McDonough at 401.683.2000 ext. 255
(*mcd@portsmouthabbey.org*) or email Father Ambrose at
fatherambrose@portsmouthabbey.org

PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL

285 Cory's Lane Portsmouth, Rhode Island 401.683.2000
visit our website: *www.portsmouthabbey.org*

BRIEFLY NOTED

POLITICAL VISIONS & ILLUSIONS: A SURVEY AND CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES.
By DAVID T. KOYZIS.
InterVarsity. 281 pp. $18 paper.

Koyzis' book sounds two basic themes—that "ideologies" are necessarily idolatrous and that "Christian democracy" offers a nonidolatrous political "vision." Ideology "flows out of the (idolatrous) religious commitment of a person or community," says Koyzis, and he discusses the ostensibly idolatrous religious commitments inherent in five ideologies: liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, democracy, and socialism. This part of the book ultimately does not persuade. These ideologies are not unified systems of thought, and given alternative, even mutually exclusive, ways of construing these "ideologies," Koyzis chooses the one most convenient for his argument. A person can, no doubt, make an idol out of an ideology, but the mere possibility does not establish, as Koyzis seems to think, that Christian liberals, Christian conservatives, etc., have committed themselves to an essentially idolatrous project. The "Christian" adjective is not without its own power. Consider, for example, Koyzis' treatment of liberalism. In it, he lumps together the several philosophies that have fallen under that label. The idolatrous "soteriology of freedom" that he identifies in the works of Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard is therefore, for Koyzis, an essential component of liberalism itself. Thus he finds Christian liberals such as Michael Novak and Richard John Neuhaus to be, at best, inconsistent liberals in that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they refuse to embrace the "fundamentally secular worldview" inherent in their ideology. (Koyzis adds that "we can be grateful to God" for the logical inconsistencies of Novak's and Neuhaus' liberalism, "since it testifies to His common grace.") After all this, the reader is surprised to find that Koyzis' own argument for Christian democracy has so little Christ in it. Drawing on Dutch thinker Herman Dooyeweerd, Koyzis runs his politics through the "cultural mandate" commanded at the creation (Genesis 1:28). Quoting Albert Wolters, Koyzis affirms that "redemption is nothing less than 'creation regained,'" and dismisses the idea that political ethics should be understood Christologically. That the structure of creation points to and typifies redemption (and therefore is understood only as transformed in Christ) seems to play no distinctive role in how he understands the "cultural mandate." Finally, Koyzis refuses on principle to sketch the policy implications of Christian democracy (aside from school choice). It is problematic to promote a "Christian democratic movement" without identifying how its policies would look compared to the idolatrous policies of the ideologies it proposes to replace.

—James R. Rogers

THE CREED: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND WHY IT MATTERS.
By LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON.
Image. 324 pp. $12.95 paper.

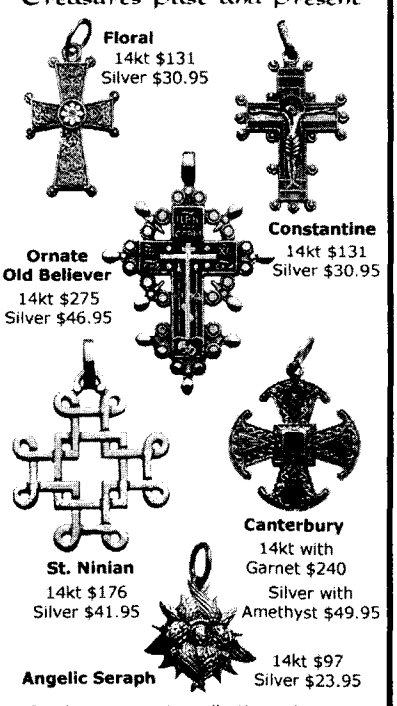
Many contemporary religionists, Christians among them, fail to see the relevance of a written and spoken creed to their faith and life. The theological tendencies of such people run the gamut, from the likes of retired Episcopal Bishop John Spong, who rejects Christian orthodoxy root and branch, to certain types of conservative Protestants, who claim "no creed but the Bible." Creeds are often seen as superfluous and confining, or as relics of a bygone age when religion was frequently shoved down unwilling throats. Luke Timothy Johnson begs to differ with such ideas. A lay Catholic theologian, Johnson offers an exegesis of the Nicene Creed (or more precisely, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed), phrase by phrase, demonstrating its intellectual depth and its potential to be a life-giving, freedom-enhancing mechanism in the contemporary Church.

HOW TO PUT FIRST THINGS IN YOUR WILL

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put FIRST THINGS in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. Bequests are free of estate tax, and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give needed support for FIRST THINGS by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010 (insert amount being given here) to be used to support the ministry of FIRST THINGS.* A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name FIRST THINGS as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

GALLERY BYZANTIUM
Treasures Past and Present



Purchase our entire collection online at:
www.gallerybyzantium.com
1-800-798-6173

FACULTY NEEDED:
Are you eager to unleash the power of a Christian liberal arts education on a society in transition? Openings in various academic disciplines.

Our faculty play a vital role in preparing students from the former Soviet Union to take the lead in revitalizing business, politics, education and the church.

Are you ready to take your teaching a step further?

lithuania christian college
TRANSFORMING STUDENTS ::::: TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

www.lccbc.org
faculty@lccbc.org
604.851.0151

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The implications of the Creed for Christians in the postmodern era are staggering. In reciting it they affirm a life of community in a world marked by extreme individualism. Says Johnson: "In an age that avoids commitment, they pledge themselves to a set of convictions and thereby to each other. . . . In a society where accepted wisdom changes by the minute, they claim that some truths are so critical that they must be repeated over and over again. In a throwaway, consumerist world, they accept, preserve, and continue tradition. Reciting the creed at worship is thus a countercultural act." Johnson sees the Nicene Creed as a definition of what it means to be a Christian. It is a rule of faith, setting boundaries without erecting unnecessary barriers. A healthy appropriation of the Creed, Johnson believes, will help avoid the extremes of both modernism and sectarian fundamentalism. This is a thoughtful contribution to the literature of Christian apologetics.

—Jeff McAlister

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY: A GUIDE TO GRAECO-ROMAN RELIGIONS.
By HANS-JOSEF KLAUCK.
Translated by BRIAN MCNEIL.
Fortress. 516 pp. $30 paper.

It is perhaps self-evident that a knowledge of the religious complexion of the Mediterranean world in the early centuries of the Roman Empire is essential for understanding the early history of Christianity. Yet the sources are so disparate and the forms of religion so varied that most students have difficulty knowing what to study and where to find what needs to be known. In a single dense volume this fine survey offers an account of the whole by close consideration of the various parts: sacrifices, religious associations, domestic religion, the cult of the dead, mystery religions, magic, the cult of the rulers, and philosophical religion (e.g., Stoicism), with a concluding chapter on Gnosticism. Klauck, professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago, has ideas about what to make of all this, but the value of the book is to be found in his brief summaries of the various topics, the judicious citation of primary sources, and the up-to-date bibliographies.

—Robert Louis Wilken

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO HANS URS VON BALTHASAR.
Edited by EDWARD T. OAKES and DAVID MOSS.
Cambridge University Press. 284 pp. $25.99 paper.

You could spend a lifetime, or so it seems, reading Hans Urs von Balthasar. At least three or four years would be given just to reading through the long shelf of books, and then comes the rereading and pondering without end. I suppose that Father Edward T. Oakes has read Balthasar as closely as anyone alive. His book *The Pattern of Redemption* is the best introduction to the great man's thought. Now Oakes has joined up with David Moss of Exeter University in editing *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, which contains seventeen essays by mostly notable theologians, plus editorial commentary. Balthasar, who died at age eighty-three in 1988, is among Catholics probably the most discussed theologian today. But Protestant and Orthodox thinkers have also been brought under his spell, as witness *The Beauty of the Infinite* by Orthodox theologian David B. Hart, a tour de force justly acclaimed as one of the most suggestive theological contri-

SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

Is the Lord calling you to join us

- ✠ in exploring the mystery of God in prayer;
- ✠ in living a common life;
- ✠ in the work of teaching or administration in an outstanding college preparatory school for boys, grades 7 through 12?

For information about our Monastic Life ExperienceWeek
Saturday, June 18 - Sunday, June 26, 2005

contact Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141.
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or **1-314-434-5774**
E-mail: frralph@priory.org
or
visit our website at **www.stlouisabbey.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

butions of recent years (see the FT review, March 2004). In the afterword to the *Cambridge Companion*, Oakes allows himself to speculate on "the future of Balthasarian theology." He notes that Balthasar set himself against the mainstream of modern thought from Descartes to Kant to Hegel with its "epistemological obsession" and "turn to the subject"—a belief that truth can only be found, and indeed is founded, in the subject. But Oakes may underestimate the extent to which Balthasar anticipated much of postmodernism, especially in its continental and French modes, both incorporating and trumping its insights with a Christian understanding of reality and how it can be known. This is an argument very effectively made by David Hart. For the interested but uninitiated, the place to enter the conversation is Oakes' *The Pattern of Redemption*, followed by a substantial investment of time in the Balthasar writings highlighted by Oakes, then the *Cambridge Companion* to see what others make of it all, leading into Hart's *The Beauty* to get an idea of what might be "the future of Balthasarian theology."

FRANCIS OF ASSISI: PERFORMING THE GOSPEL LIFE.
By LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM.
Eerdmans. 160 pp. $14 paper.

An engaging and informative contribution to the vast literature on the man commonly described as, next to the Virgin Mother, the most popular of saints. Among the merits of this little book is Cunningham's guide to that literature and his description of the frequently conflicting reasons through history for the celebration of Francis. His own conclusion is that Francis "was simply a little Umbrian touched by the mysterious power of grace who had a revolutionary idea: to live the life of the Christ of the Gospels as closely and as literally as he could. In that sense, Francis was a radical fundamentalist." In sum, Francis "performed the gospel." An appendix indicates that the much loved "Prayer of Saint Francis" ("Lord, make me an instrument of your peace / Where there is hatred, let me sow love. . . .) was written in the early twentieth century and, by a circuitous route, ended up being attributed to the saint.

PULPIT AND POLITICS.
Edited by CORWIN SMIDT.
Baylor University Press.
352 pp. $34.95 paper.

A survey of clergy dispositions on matters theological, social, and political, drawing on data over a twelve-year period. The chapter on Catholic priests is based on so small a sampling as to be of slight use. The overall finding, however, is that Protestant clergy, both evangelical and oldline, are notably less overtly political and somewhat more theologically orthodox than was the case in 1989. At the same time, partisan divides are more deeply entrenched.

STATE-BUILDING: GOVERNANCE AND WORLD ORDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY.
By FRANCIS FUKUYAMA.
Cornell University Press.
160 pp. $21.

Fukuyama of Johns Hopkins University, best known for *The End of History and the Last Man*, brings his considerable talents to bear on the question of nation-building. Failing and failed states become the playthings of terrorists, gangsters, and bloody tyrants. There is no real-world alternative to sovereign states in maintaining a modicum of decency and order. Therefore, those with the power to do so, mainly the U.S., have to become more adept at building and rebuilding states. This, Fukuyama insists, is neither imperialism nor altruism, but a condition for a livable world in the decades ahead. The argument is crisp and frequently persuasive, although it needs a great deal of fleshing out, and its reception will depend in large part on what happens in Afghanistan and Iraq in the next few years.

DREAM CATCHERS.
By PHILIP JENKINS.
Oxford University Press.
306 pp. $28.

The subtitle is "How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality." The author of *The Next Christendom* and numerous other books on religion and culture does a superb job of demonstrating how Native American spiritualities have

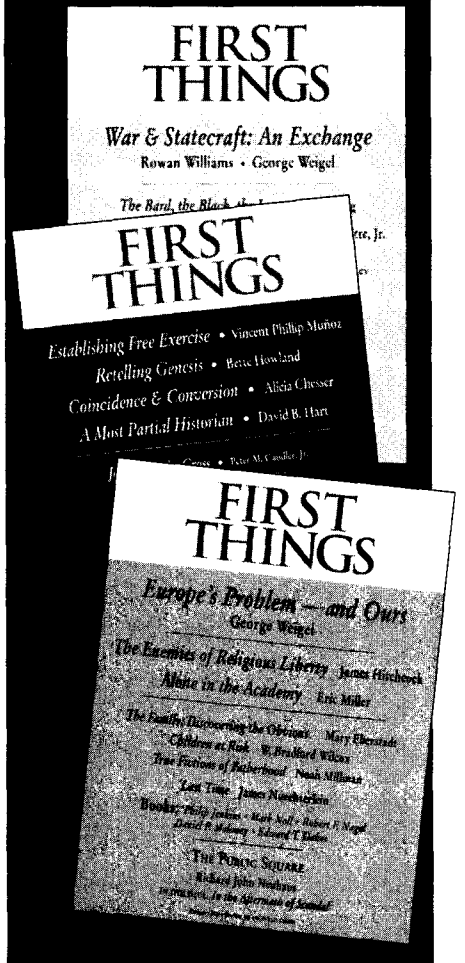
Professor of Classics

The Department of Classical and Early Christian Studies at Christendom College anticipates that an Assistant Professorship position will be open in the Autumn of 2005. A successful candidate should have a Ph.D. in hand and be a generalist in Classics with the ability to teach Greek and Latin on all undergraduate levels. The person hired should be able and willing initially to teach in Christendom College's core curriculum as well, particularly courses in ancient and medieval culture. The Department would welcome a candidate with experience teaching Koine Greek and Ecclesiastical Latin, as well as Biblical Hebrew. Christendom College is a small coeducational liberal arts institution dedicated to the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. Deadline for applications will be February 18th. Interested applicants should send a cover letter outlining their teaching philosophy and research interests, a curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, a sample of scholarly writing, and other relevant supporting material to Dr. Steven Snyder, Vice President for Academic Affairs, 134 Christendom Dr., Front Royal, VA 22630. Inquiries about the position may be directed to Dr. Snyder: (snyder@christendom.edu).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

www.firstthings.com

Over 227,000 hits a day!


FIRST THINGS
War & Statecraft: An Exchange
Rowan Williams • George Weigel
FIRST THINGS
Establishing Free Exercise • Vincent Phillip Muñoz
Retelling Genesis • Bette Howland
Coincidence & Conversion • Alicia Chesser
A Most Partial Historian • David B. Hart
FIRST THINGS
Europe's Problem — and Ours
George Weigel
The Enemies of Religious Liberty Jenna Hitchcock
Make in the Academy Eric Miller
Children at Risk W. Bradford Wilcox
Lost Time James Nuechterlein
The Public Square
Richard John Neuhaus

It's new... it's improved... it's easy to use for researching the best that's written or said about religion and cultural issues! Visit our redesigned website, First Things Online... TODAY!

Searching for the latest discussions of religion and public life?

Click FIRST THINGS *first!*

Now you can get even more out of the online home of FIRST THINGS, the Journal of Religion, Culture, and Public Life! On our website you can:

Browse a huge assortment of past issues.

Search past issues by author, keywords, and even the full text using our cutting-edge search engine.

Read a collection of ground-breaking articles of special interest.

Discuss articles with other readers in your city or by e-mail.

Shop for the best books on religion, culture, and public life in our new online bookstore.

"The spiritual nerve center of the new conservatism."

— NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

www.firstthings.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been both invented and exploited by promoters of "New Age" religion. At the same time, he contends that some Native Americans have benefited from that misrepresentation. Their claims to sovereign rights have been enhanced, and they enjoy a respect unprecedented in American history. This is history and cultural analysis of a high order.

The Cost of "Choice": Women Evaluate the Impact of Abortion.
Edited by Erika Bachiochi.
Encounter. 180 pp. $17.95 paper.

These are essays by "imminent women," says the back-cover blurb. It is a suggestive phrase. Some of the writers are undoubtedly eminent, such as Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese of Emory. From various perspectives—medical, psychological, legal, and autobiographical—the twelve essays explain why the unlimited abortion license and the feminist ideology supporting the license have turned out to be very bad for women, and most especially for women in disadvantaged circumstances. The book should help hasten the day when both children and women are more fully protected from a deadly choice—a day that one trusts is coming, if not imminent

The Jewish Century.
By Yuri Slezkine.
Princeton University Press. 436 pp. $29.95.

"Jealousy of the Jews may remain both a fact of life and an ineradicable Jewish expectation," writes this professor of history at the University of California, Berkeley. Jews are the "Mercurians," fabulously successful entrepreneurial hustlers, who serve the establishment "Apollonians," whom, along the way, they turn into Jews. To be modern is to be Jewish, but to be a Jewish modern is best of all. The book is crammed with statistics on how Jews, less than three percent of the American population, are disproportionately successful, especially in the university, media, and entertainment elites. "In the competitive world of American ethnic communities, there are two paths to success: upward mobility defined according to wealth, education, and political power, and downward mobility measured by degrees of victimhood." By upward or downward measures, Jews got everyone else beat by a mile. Their power and affluence are obvious, while their claim to victimhood is acknowledged as "a common sign of virtue." This book will be relished by anti-Semites and by Jews who need to be reassured that it is really, really great to be a Jew in America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

WHY THE JEWS DID OR DID NOT REJECT JESUS

It's coming on ten years since Thomas Cahill published *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. The book gave new life to a genre of tribal literature in which extraordinary claims are made on behalf of one people or another to whom we are indebted for their crucial contribution to creating or preserving almost everything we hold dear. Now we have David Klinghoffer's *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History* (Doubleday, 272 pp. $24.95). We should all be very grateful that the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah because, if they had not, the Christian movement would have remained merely a sect within Judaism rather than becoming the world-transforming force that gave us Western civilization. That's the argument in a nutshell, most of the rest of the book being devoted to why Jews must continue to reject Jesus. And, in fact, says Klinghoffer, "the Jewish rejection of Jesus has remained a constant."

As a young journalist, Klinghoffer discovered and fervently embraced his Jewish identity. This story is told in his frequently moving spiritual memoir *The Lord Will Gather Me In*. He has also written for these pages. His "Anti-Semitism Without Anti-Semites" (FT April 1998) prompted a stinging rebuke from Rabbi David Novak of our editorial board (FT August/September 1998). Nothing daunted, Klinghoffer continues on his somewhat eccentric way, provocatively probing the Jewish-Christian connection. He is closely associated with Rabbi Daniel Lapin of *Toward Tradition* who has been a prominent defender of Christians falsely accused of anti-Semitism and has argued, in the face of powerful Jewish animosity, that the "religious right" is, all in all, a good thing for America and a good thing for Jews.

In his new book, Klinghoffer is admiring of Christianity's civilizational achievements, although not of its theology. He rebuts the claim that it is anti-Semitic to say that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus, citing Maimonides and other Jewish authorities who say the Jews were right to eliminate a false messiah. He debunks the notion that Nazism and the Holocaust were a product of Christianity, and he underscores Nazi hatred of Christianity and the Judaism from which it came. He treats sympathetically Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*, and is witheringly critical of the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish organizations that thrive by exploiting irrational fears of anti-Semitism in America. In sum, Klinghoffer is in many respects Christian-friendly.

Except for the fact that Christianity itself is premised upon the fatal falsehood that Jesus is the Messiah. Much of the book is given to a detailed point-by-point rebuttal of the claim that Jesus fulfilled the messianic promises of the Hebrew Scriptures that Christians call the Old Testament. These arguments will be of interest mainly to those who describe themselves as Hebrew Christians or Messianic Christians, and who believe they are fulfilled as Jews by becoming disciples of Jesus. The arch-villain in Klinghoffer's story is the apostle Paul who, he says, radically rejected Judaism and invented a new religion dressed up in "biblical trappings." Although Klinghoffer excoriates the liberal theological reductionisms of the nineteenth century, both Jewish and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christian, at this point his argument is oddly similar to a long liberal tradition of blaming Paul for distorting the more attractive religion of Jesus. Along with many Christians, he fails to appreciate the implications of the fact that Paul's epistles were written well before the gospel accounts of Jesus. In part because of their prior placement in the New Testament, it is a common error to think that the seemingly more straightforward gospel accounts were later and complicatedly "theologized" by Paul, whereas, in fact, Paul's writings reflect what was generally believed about Jesus in the community that later produced the gospel accounts.

This tendency to get things backwards is at the crux of Klinghoffer's argument. He writes, "We arrive here at the very heart of the difference between Judaism and the religion that Paul originated. The difference is still observable in the faith of Christians, as compared with that of Jews, down to our own time. Followers of Paul read and understand the Hebrew Bible through a certain philosophical lens—they bring to it the premise that Jesus is the savior, that salvation is from him. They read the Old Testament from the perspective of the New. They prioritize the New over the Old."

Well, yes, of course. Only some Messianic Christians and Jews such as Klinghoffer think that the truth of Christianity stands or falls on whether, without knowing about Jesus in advance, one can begin with Genesis 1 and read through all the prophecies of Hebrew Scripture and then match them up with Jesus to determine whether he is or is not the Messiah. As with Saul on the road to Damascus, Christians begin, and Christianity begins, with the encounter with Christ. As with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the first Christians, who were Jews, experienced in that encounter the opening of the Hebrew Scriptures, revealing, retrospectively, how they testify to Jesus as the Christ. Klinghoffer writes, "The resurrection works as a proof that Jesus was 'the Christ' only if you have already accepted his authority to render interpretations of Scripture contrary to the obvious meaning of the words. That is, it works only if you are already a Christian." The more one takes seriously Old Testament prophecy, writes Klinghoffer, "the more convinced he becomes that it is awfully hard to make Christian doctrine sit naturally on its presumed foundation, the Hebrew Bible. Yet even the arguments based on prophecies obviously aren't perfectly invulnerable to refutation. Otherwise there would be no Christians, or at least no thoughtful Christians. They would all be Jews."

This is, I'm afraid, gravely muddled. The argument, in effect, is that Jews reject Jesus because they are already Jews, and the mark of being a Jew is that one rejects Jesus. This is quite unconvincing in its circularity. Christian thinkers, including Paul, viewed Christ and the Church as the fulfillment of the promise to Israel not because they were engaged in tit-for-tat exegetical disputes with Jews over what Klinghoffer recognizes are often ambiguous and enigmatic Old Testament prophecies. Christians early on, and very importantly in engagement with Greek philosophy, developed a christology that entailed an understanding that all of reality, including the history of Israel, finds its center in Christ who is the Word of God (the *Logos*), the image of the invisible God in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Colossians 1), and, finally, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. These philosophical and theological developments, almost totally ignored by Klinghoffer, form the matrix within which the Church—mainly Jewish in its beginnings—understood Israel and its Scriptures. For the early Christians, as for Christians today, the person of Jesus Christ was revelatory also of the history and sacred writings of Israel, of which he is the fulfillment.

The Other Jews

Klinghoffer is involved in an exercise of "what if" counterfactual historical revisionism. In fact, the early Christians, both Jewish and gentile, made no secret of the Jewish grounding of their faith. The second century Marcion who pitted Christianity against the history of Israel was condemned as a heretic. Many pagans did deride Christianity as a "Jewish sect," which did not prevent its continuing growth. Moreover, those Jews who did not accept Jesus were themselves involved in reinventing Judaism after the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. It is not too much to say that there were two competing versions of the history of Israel that were presented to the world: what became known as rabbinical Judaism on the one hand and the Church on the other.

The very title of the book, *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus*, is highly problematic. Scholars generally agree that in the first century there were approximately six million Jews in the Roman Empire (for some reason, Klinghoffer says five million). That was about one tenth of the entire population. About one million were in Palestine, including today's State of Israel, while those in the diaspora were very much part of the establishment in cities such as Alexandria and Constantinople. At one point Klinghoffer acknowledges that, during the life of Jesus, only a minuscule minority of Jews either accepted or rejected Jesus, for the simple reason that most Jews had not heard of him. Some scholars have noted that, by the fourth or fifth century, there were only a few hundred thousand, at most a million, people who identified themselves as Jews. What happened to the millions of others? The most likely answer,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is suggested, is that they became Christians. What if the great majority of Jews did not reject Jesus? That throws into question both the title of the book and Klinghoffer's central thesis. The question can be avoided only by the definitional legerdemain of counting as Jews only those who rejected Jesus and continued to ally themselves with rabbinical Judaism's account of the history of Israel.

There are other parts to Klinghoffer's telling of the story of Judaism. He is admittedly uneasy about "revealing" some of the nastier and very crude aspects of Jewish polemics against Christianity over the centuries. There is, for example, the rabbinical claim that Jesus and those Jews whom he misled are forever consigned to suffering in boiling excrement. But, as he notes, such unpleasantries have long been a staple in anti-Semitic literature and are today widely circulated on the Internet. He does not mention that they are vibrantly alive today in hyper-Orthodox literature, mainly written in Hebrew, in both Israel and this country. The viciousness of anti-Jewish polemic by Christians over the centuries is, of course, much better known. Determining who has said nastier things about whom is a bootless enterprise—as bootless as beginning with Genesis 1 and trying to connect the dots of prophecy in order to "prove" that Jesus was or was not the promised Messiah.

Klinghoffer ends on the note that Jews are elected by God to be the "nation of priests" whose duty is to minister spiritually to the "congregation" of Christians, Muslims, and others who will, God willing, one day come to recognize the truth of the religion preserved by those who reject Jesus, which is the decisive mark of being a Jew. While he is deeply appreciative of the gift that America has been for Jews, he does not seriously engage the current state of Jewish-Christian dialogue here as represented by, for instance, David Novak's writings. Nor does he mention the historically unprecedented statement of 2000, *Dabru Emet* ("To Speak the Truth"), signed by hundreds of Jewish scholars and proposing a constructive understanding of Christianity (see FT November 2000). That statement says, among other things: "Jews and Christians worship the same God. Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshipers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel."

Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point of Western History is not a work of scholarship, which is not necessarily a criticism. The author is a journalist who has read widely, if somewhat eclectically, and offers a provocative thesis that will, I expect, receive considerable attention. His many and contentious pages on the details of Old Testament prophecy will be chiefly of interest to a minority of Jews and Messianic Christians who will likely continue their exegetical disputes until Our Lord returns in glory. The larger claim that the Jewish rejection of Jesus made Western civilization possible is an exercise in tribal boosterism that, like Thomas Cahill's stylish pandering to Irish pride, will not stand up under closer examination. As I said, David Klinghoffer is in many ways a friend of Christians and Christianity, but his latest book contributes little to understanding what it means to be a Christian or a Jew—an understanding that, as St. Paul ponders in Romans 9 through 11, continues to be deeply problematic in a manner that is not untouched by the mystery of God's hidden purposes.

FT

THE BISHOPS AND REFORM DELAYED

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

"Some turning point!" snorted a friend who keeps a gimlet eye on matters episcopal. He was referring to my little essay on promising developments in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) following their June meeting in Colorado. I titled it "Bishops at a Turning Point" (see FT October 2004). After last November's meeting in Washington, I can only say in my defense that I did caution that, like a big oil tanker, institutions sometimes turn very slowly, almost imperceptibly. "Oh, the turn was perceptible enough," retorted the aforementioned friend. "They turned back."

My friend is hardly alone in his dour assessment. "Our bishops, it seems, want a time-out," opined the editors of the leftward *National Catholic Reporter*. Voices from center to right were not so sanguine. There was, for instance, the election of Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane, Washington, as president of the conference. With a slate of ten nominees, he won, albeit narrowly, on the first ballot. Skylstad, it is generally agreed, is a company man. He had been vice president of the Conference for the last three years under Bishop Wilton Gregory, and it has always been the custom

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that vice presidents succeed to the presidency. But these are not customary times, and, while company men have a necessary part to play, it was thought by many bishops—but obviously not by enough—that the conference needed bolder leadership.

While bishops, needless to say, are immune to the lures of ambition, the general rule for getting ahead is not to blot one's copybook, and Skylstad had been less than a success even on that score. Spokane is, for instance, racked with priestly sex abuse scandals and the consequent lawsuits and financial settlements. There are published reports of nefarious doings of which one has to think the bishop had to know, but he, in his innocence, apparently noticed nothing out of the way. During the past year, he took a pass on the question of pro-abortion Catholic politicians, but not before firing a shot at bishops "who use the Eucharist as a weapon." Shortly before the November meeting, it was announced that Spokane was filing for bankruptcy, with unforeseen consequences for compromising the governance of the diocese. But Skylstad had been the vice president, and so he was elected president. It is the way things have always been done.

A Controverted Track Record

At the same time, Francis Cardinal George of Chicago, frequently described as the most respected member of the conference, was elected vice president. That almost certainly means that, if he agrees, he will be president in three years. (If George declines, the speculation is that Bishop Donald Wuerl of Pittsburgh will be the next president.) According to that intrepid Rome reporter John Allen, in the Holy See, where George is held in highest esteem, there is great satisfaction with his election. It is said that, while Skylstad will be "the public face" of the conference, George will supply the "gravitas" that is not always in abundant supply, even among bishops. As much, if not more, discussed in the news from the November meeting was the election of Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, Pennsylvania, as head of the liturgy committee. Although it is not clear that the rules required it, Cardinal George resigned as liturgy chairman in order to accept the vice presidency, thus leaving the liturgy position vacant.

Trautman has a long and much controverted track record on matters liturgical. He was head of the same committee for a term in the 1990s. I have had occasion to offer some deferentially skeptical observations on Trautman's very progressive views of Catholic worship (see FT October 1997). The election of Trautman was, one archbishop tells me, "a direct slap in the face of Arinze." That is Francis Cardinal Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, who has upset what is commonly described as the network of liturgical terrorists that is responsible for the banalization of Catholic worship over the last several decades.

Talk with anyone who follows these disputes and you will hear a lot about "ICEL." That is the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, not to be confused with another ICEL, the International Consortium for Experiential Learning, although there are similarities. Cardinal Arinze and others in Rome are concerned that liturgical reforms have gotten out of hand. He thinks, for instance, that English texts should be accurate translations of the Latin, and that the experiential and experimental should be tempered by the awareness that the Mass and other rites are universal, as in Catholic. Trautman is a great champion of ICEL, of "gender-inclusive" language, and of liturgical license in general. In recent years he has crisscrossed the country making speeches against "interference" by Roman reactionaries who, he says, are bent upon extinguishing the light of liturgical renewal. Trautman's enthusiasm for gender-inclusive language has prompted some to refer to him, affectionately no doubt, as Bishop Trautperson. He is said to think that is not funny, and who can blame him?

Trautman's nomination and election came as a surprise to most of the bishops, but obviously not to all. The two nominees for the liturgy post were Justin Cardinal Rigali of Philadelphia and Bishop Allen Vigneron of Oakland, California. Then, quite out of the blue but employing a rarely used rule, Bishop Trautman was nominated from the floor, with the five necessary seconders already neatly lined up. The move was obviously well organized. After the voting, bishops who were unhappy with the result said it may have been a mistake to have two initial nominees who were perceived as being, in the words of one bishop, "too sympathetic to Rome." The liturgy committee, like most committees of the conference, has little real power, but Trautman's election signals a direction, and the committee can obstruct and delay Roman reforms. Between those who in public prayer prefer the formal "We humbly beseech you, Almighty God" and those who prefer the ever-so-spontaneous "Lord, we're just here to tell you," and between those who think the Mass is about the Real Presence of Christ and those who accent deeply meaningful interactions among his Really Awesome People, the bishops wanted to find a middle ground. So they went with the spontaneously klutzy and deeply meaningful.

There were other developments. The very astute Archbishop John Myers of Newark, New Jersey, was elected chairman of canon law, but just barely. The bishops agreed to work over the next couple of years on a pastoral letter on the family. Auxiliary Bishop

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Sklba of Milwaukee is the new head of ecumenism. His ecumenical disposition tends toward the latitudinarian, although he has clarified that he does think there may still be church-dividing differences between Catholics and Lutherans (see FT February 2004). The bishops approved membership in a new project called "Christian Churches Together" (CCT). This was after they were given firm assurances that the commitment is to little more than friendly meetings among Christian leaders on a regular basis. CCT would not, they were promised, be able to issue statements on behalf of the bishops without their permission. Of course, CCT could issue statements on behalf of the other "four families" in its membership, in which case the headlines would read, "Catholics Oppose National Christian Leaders." But the general feeling was that there was not much risk in CCT and maybe some good would come of it, so the bishops went along. The five families of CCT are Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Orthodox, Racial/Ethnic (meaning mainly black), and Catholic. "Talk about the five families sounds like a novel by Mario Puzo," said one archbishop.

The discussion of new forms for episcopal collegiality and accountability, such as a plenary council or a special synod of bishops, was put off. It is scheduled to be taken up in the meeting of June 2006. The charter and statutes adopted at Dallas 2002 for dealing with priestly sex abuse, including "zero tolerance" and "one strike and you're out," are being reexamined by Rome and will be revisited by the bishops next June. The worry that the conference is staff-dominated and committee-driven was addressed in a report that proposed that the bishops should "prioritize" their many concerns. (The use of "prioritize" does sound like it came from another committee, which it did.) Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, a keeper of the flame from the old Cardinal Bernardin days of the conference, said the report was very nice but was "blue-skying it," meaning that such changes were not going to happen. As another bishop told me, "Conference business has been bureaucratic Jabberwocky from the beginning, and will be Jabberwocky until the end."

In any event, the sense at the meeting was that the bishops need to focus on putting the Catholic house in order, concentrating on evangelization, catechesis, the Eucharist, and the priesthood. The last means increasing priestly vocations, of course, but also attending to the morale of the priesthood, which has been seriously damaged by the sex abuse scandals and the propensity of bishops to throw priests overboard in order to save money, to save face, and to save their own skins. The priorities set, however, do reflect the observation of Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee in his 2004 Erasmus Lecture that the bishops will increasingly attend to internal (*ad intra*) problems rather than lobbying on public policy (*ad extra*).

Then there was Theodore Cardinal McCarrick of Washington DC, and his task force on what to do about Catholic politicians who publicly and persistently defy the Church's teaching. It may be recalled from my commentary on the June 2004 meeting that the Cardinal's position is that the bishops should not do very much, if anything at all, about it. I had written that McCarrick had been less than straightforward with his colleagues in representing a letter from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on the subject. A number of bishops have said that I greatly understated what McCarrick did, but I'll stay with my formulation that he was "less than straightforward." At the November meeting, McCarrick was to make a report on behalf of his task force but, despite the fact that the agenda was finished early and the meeting was reduced to three from its scheduled four days, the Cardinal "in the interest of time" simply put a two-and-a-half-page report on the chairs. That precluded debate and awkward questions. Not that the bishops were eager for debate or inclined to ask awkward questions.

Competing Causes

According to Cardinal McCarrick's report, everything was handled just right. "Bishops, pastors, and parishioners across the country have been wrestling with how our faith should shape our decisions in public life. This has been a very good thing." Yes, there were problems. "The media or partisan forces sometimes tried to pit one bishop against another." Oh dear, the media and partisan forces are at it again. Especially those partisan forces that are obsessed by the "one issue politics" of abortion. Never mind that some bishops very publicly stated that support for abortion and embryonic stem-cell research gravely compromised a politician's *communio* with the Church, while others just as publicly said they saw no problem and happily invited such politicians to receive Communion. "We do not believe," says the McCarrick report, "that our commitment to human life and dignity and our pursuit of justice and peace are competing causes." But nobody said they were competing causes, except possibly Cardinal McCarrick and other bishops who seem to think the Democratic Party has a monopoly on the pursuit of justice and peace. At the November meeting, there was neither opportunity nor stomach for discussing McCarrick's report. Which may be just as well. The bishops were simply grateful that they had escaped the prospect of having a radically pro-abortion Catholic in the White

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

House. Except, of course, for those bishops committed to the pursuit of justice and peace.

So what happened to the "turning point"? I asked several of those who are commonly called John Paul II bishops. They are called that because they see John Paul II as an exemplar to emulate rather than an aberration to be endured. They see this pontificate as the source of authentic renewal and reform rather than as an authoritarian imposition to be resisted. The answers to my question were various: "We play by the rules and they don't." "The old Bernardin machine still has more gas than we thought." "I refuse to play the debasing game of conference politics." "Some find their satisfaction in being a conference player. My satisfaction is in being a bishop." "The conference is finally irrelevant. In no important way does it affect what I have to do in my diocese. Why waste time on it?" And so forth.

And then there was this: "You were right in the first place, the June meeting was a turning point. The Old Guard knows that, and in the [November] meeting they fought back. Time and the age of the newer bishops are not on their side. Give us a few more years. The springtime of reform that the Holy Father talks about may not come until after his death, but it will come." *Oremus*. Meantime, hold your Calloohs and Callays. The Jabberwock lives.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Some Methodists have a website (*www.theymustrepent.com*) and are collecting signatures to have two fellow Methodists, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, kicked out of the church for their part in the Iraq war. Such action is necessary, they say, "because the President claims his decision to go to war was guided by prayer." It doesn't say here what happens if George W. repents and promises to pray no more.

■ Who should decide about when and where to go to war? After discussing the criteria of just war, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good" (§ 2309). That's not good enough, writes Father Drew Christiansen in *America*, a Jesuit magazine. "In light of the war in Iraq, it appears that the *Catechism* needs updating. The revision should take into account recent church teaching and the example of the pope, bishops, and faithful in opposing war. It should acknowledge the fallibility and the failures of political leaders. Above all, it should affirm the right and responsibility of the public to set a limit in public opinion to the warmaking of elected political elites." A great idea. Like, you know, maybe we could have elections in which candidates debate their differences about the war and other, like, really important things, and then maybe the winner, like, gets to be president. Hey, it might be worth giving it a try.

■ *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, regularly reports on terrorist acts around the world but assiduously avoids mentioning that they are almost all associated with radical Islam. There are several reasons for this: the Holy See wants to resist any suggestion that we are engaged in a war of religions; as the chief institutional representative of world Christianity, it has a unique role in developing any future dialogue with Islam; and it is keenly aware of the precarious position of Christians in Muslim countries. These are all honorable reasons. But a more candid view is offered in a lead editorial in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a Jesuit-edited magazine that is also vetted by the Vatican secretariat of state. The editorial speaks straightforwardly about "terrorism of Islamic origin." "There is a tragic conceptual connection beginning in New York on September 11, 2001, and reaching Beslan, in North Ossetia, on September 1, 2004." The editors then list the dozens of incidents, with their many hundreds of deaths, perpetrated by "terrorism of Islamic origin." "In reality, Islamic terrorism has not changed the goals that it has pursued since its origin [up to] the work of Osama bin Laden: to fight the Jews and the 'crusaders' (the Christians, seen as inveterate enemies of Islam); to fight against the Western world—and the United States in the first instance—that seeks to dominate the Islamic peoples and rob them of their riches, and which, moreover, because of its atheism and corruption, constitutes a grave threat to the Islamic faith; to vindicate the offenses and damages that Western colonialism has inflicted upon the dignity of the Islamic peoples and upon their culture and economic development; to strip of power the governments of majority Islamic countries that are allied with the West and have permitted the American military to trample upon the holy ground of Muslim countries and have served as logistic and military bases to fight against other Muslim countries and deprive them of their oil, the great resource that Allah has given to the 'believers,' denying it to the 'infidels.'" "The most serious change that has taken place in terrorism," say the editors, "is the loss of even the most minimal sense of humanity," which, one notes, is integral to the strategy of throwing the whole world into a state of terror. *La Civiltà Cattolica* does not offer a blanket endorse-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment of responses to terrorism by the U.S. and its allies. The suggestion is that the war in Iraq has inadvertently contributed to increased terrorism. The editorial is noteworthy not for saying much that is new but for underscoring a reality about which the Vatican is usually and so manifestly reticent: the terrorism afflicting the world is, historically and at present, Islamic in origin. Arguments about whether this is a distortion of Islam and whether warfare might one day be replaced by dialogue are interesting and important. But wisdom begins with giving a name to the reality by which we are confronted: Islamic terrorism.

■ "The War in Iraq: How Catholic Conservatives Got It Wrong" is a long, almost ten-page, article in *Commonweal* by Peter Dula, who was sent for ten months to Iraq to write "advocacy reports" for the pacifist Mennonite Central Committee. Dula is a graduate student in theology and a gifted writer. The essay is a critique of FT, with particular reference to what George Weigel and I have and have not said about the Iraq war in these pages. Dula's position is unambiguous: "Iraq is a catastrophe—on all accounts (except perhaps for Dick Cheney's)." Dula believes that FT has been too confident of U.S. policy and too partisan in supporting the administration. Most sharply, he accuses us of being "mute," of failing to pay sufficient attention to what is happening in Iraq. In our December 2004 issue ("Internationalisms"), I tried to explain our approach to the Iraq war and to U.S. foreign policy more generally. Dula read that reflection just before his essay went to press, but it apparently did not change his mind. "All in all," he writes, "I think the critique I make of Weigel and Neuhaus in this essay still stands." Dula originally submitted the *Commonweal* essay to FT, and we gave it careful consideration. Had it engaged arguments counter to his "catastrophe" thesis, I expect we would have published it. In any event, it makes for an interesting read and I am glad it found an appropriate home at *Commonweal*.

■ In April of last year we published Joseph Bottum's "The End of the Pius Wars," and that essay serves as an introduction to a remarkable new book edited by Bottum and Rabbi David Dalin, *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII* (Lexington, 282 pp., $29.95). (I don't know why "wars" became "war" in the singular, but never mind.) *The Pius War* will likely remain the definitive answer to the slew of malicious and misleading books that have in recent decades assailed Pius XII for his "silence," or worse, during the period of Hitler and the Holocaust. Turning the tables, Rabbi Dalin makes a persuasive case that Pius should be honored as a "righteous gentile" in the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. Of inestimable value, and the product of years of laborious effort, is an annotated bibliography by William Doino, Jr. It is almost two hundred pages in length and will become an indispensable reference for all responsible writers on Pius XII, the Holy See, and the Hitler era. *The Pius War* includes a brilliant critique of John Carroll's *Constantine's Sword* by Robert Louis Wilken. The attack on Pius, Wilken notes, is about ever so much more than Pius: "At the end of the day, in spite of the enormous effort to lay bare the sins of the Church over two millennia, *Constantine's Sword* is not really a book about Christian theology of the Jews. Its subject is Christian theology *tout court*, and its polemic springs from the currently fashionable 'ideology of religious pluralism'—what might be termed horror at strong opinions. Carroll wants a Christianity that celebrates a 'Jesus whose saving act is only one disclosure of the divine love available to all,' and calls for a pluralism of 'belief and worship, of religion and no religion, that honors God by defining God as beyond every human effort to express God.' What we have, then, is a rather conventional cultural critique of Christianity. The Jews are the victims *par excellence* of the excesses of revealed religion. But what Carroll forgets is that the Jews, too, believe in revelation. If Christians, on the basis of Scriptures and the Christian tradition, cannot confess Jesus as Lord, can the Jews, on the basis of Scriptures and Jewish tradition, claim that they are the elect people of God? In Carroll's brave new world there will be neither Jews nor Christians." On the specifics of what Pius did or did not do, could or could not do, during the Holocaust, and also on the larger theological questions addressed by Wilken and others, *The Pius War* will likely be an important resource in advancing the cause of Pius XII toward his canonization.

■ Germans are, a half-century later, finding their voice in describing the horror of World War II as they experienced it. In May 2003 we reviewed W. G. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction*, a powerful account of the obliteration bombing of Hamburg. Now we have Hans Erich Nossack's *The End: Hamburg 1943*. His is a narrative of the catastrophe laden with existentialist ponderings of evil and death. The author says little about the war of which the bombing was part. "Now was no longer the time for such petty distinctions as that between friend and foe," he writes dismissively. Adam Kirsch comments in the *New York Sun*: "For this reason, *The End*, though it is a unique document and an interesting literary composition, offers little insight into the moral questions raised by the Allied bombing. That Germany is now bringing her wartime suffering to public discussion is, essentially, a positive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

development, in the sense that historical honesty is always preferable to myth and amnesia. But any recollection of Hamburg and Dresden is incomplete without the recollection of Warsaw, Rotterdam, Coventry, and Belgrade, not to mention Leningrad, Lidice, and Auschwitz. As the narrator Zeitblom declares in Thomas Mann's wartime masterpiece, *Doctor Faustus*: 'We have experienced the destruction of our noble cities from the air, a destruction that would cry to heaven if we who suffer were not ourselves laden with guilt. As it is, the cry is smothered in our throats; like King Claudius' prayer, it can "never to heaven go."'"

■ The last several years have witnessed a cultural shift marked by a renewed appreciation of the marriage-based family and the human devastations caused by infidelity and easy divorce. Remember the olden days when "open marriages" were all the rage? The shift was accelerated by last November's election and the attention paid to "moral values." But then there are those who live in an alternative universe that is self-described as "the creative community." Here is Caryn James, *New York Times* media critic, engaged in deep thinking about cultural directions. She is impressed by the popularity of the network program *Desperate Housewives*, and a recent *Oprah* episode on the joys of infidelity. Then there is the movie *Alfie*, a remake of a sleeping-around story of the 1960s. Not to mention *Kinsey*, which casts the pitiful bisexual masochist as a heroic prophet of sexual revolution, and *Closer*, which adds potty-mouthed dialogue and skin shots to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the 1966 assault on the hypocrisies and betrayals of bourgeois marriage. I haven't seen these recent films. I know only what I read in the reviews, and I understand they have all fallen flat at the box office. The interesting thing is the conclusion drawn by Caryn James. In this world of endless cheating and lying, she says, "monogamy has come to seem an impossible goal; the new ideal is honesty about infidelity." Open marriage, anyone? Caryn James is a credit to the planet on which she was born.

■ Robert Edgar, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC) and former Democratic congressman, has done some hard thinking about last November's election: "We need to work really hard at reclaiming some language. The religious right has successfully gotten out there shaping personal piety issues—civil unions, abortion—as almost the total content of 'moral values.' And yet you can't read the Old Testament without knowing God was concerned about the environment, war and peace, poverty. God doesn't want forty-five million Americans without health care." Some might get the impression from reading the Old Testament that God is pretty reckless about the environment. Think of the flood, for instance, or the torching of Sodom and Gomorrah. And He seems to be positively in favor of wars, including aggressive and preemptive ones. But even if one reads the New Testament as well, it will not be entirely clear to many what God thinks about health care in America. In fact, it is not true that forty-five million Americans are without health care. At any given time, about that many may be without a health insurance plan, most of them healthy young people who do not need much medical care. But all Americans have access to health care through religiously sponsored, especially Catholic, hospitals, public hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities. And don't forget Medicaid. Visit any emergency room and read the long list of "patients' rights" posted there, with specific reference to those without insurance or other means of payment. Is medical care, whether for the insured or the uninsured, always adequate? Of course not, and God bless those who work at improving it. But it really is not helpful to claim that God demands socialized medicine, which is the favored policy of the NCC. Now I brace myself for letters asking why I even bother to comment on such statements by the NCC. The answer is that it is a matter of charity, which God does require of us. Every once in a while, a statement by the NCC will make its way into a newspaper, and it is a simple kindness to Mr. Edgar and his friends to assure them that somebody noticed.

■ The story of Eastern Europe in the period of Soviet collapse was magnificently told by Timothy Garton Ash. He understood all the complexities and was solidly on the side of freedom. His new book, *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West*, is very much worth reading (Random House, 286 pp., $24.95). Other writers have in the last several years been underscoring the deep differences between Europe and the U.S. Robert Kagan, for instance, famously asserted that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus." See also George Weigel's "Europe's Problem—and Ours" in these pages (FT February 2004). Weigel develops that theme in a book that should be out in a few months. Ash, on the other hand, warns against our becoming obsessed with a "narcissism of minor differences" between ourselves and Europe. America is, after all, "the first European Union." Chirac of France may posture about creating a "multipolar world" to offset U.S. influence, but his is hardly the last word, says Ash. There is a great deal of interest among European nations in having a "special relationship" with the U.S. comparable to that enjoyed by Britain, and he thinks we should encourage that interest. There is, he insists, a common civilization called the West, and it is in that civ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ilization's interest to embark on a grand common effort, led by the U.S., to use its political, military, economic, and cultural strength to encourage freedom worldwide and end poverty in Africa and other places that have missed out on the benefits of development. Timothy Garton Ash is a thoughtful observer and knows how to make a persuasive argument. At this point, however, it is by no means evident that Europe has the capacity or the will to pull its weight for the kind of future Ash envisions. The depopulation of major European nations, the rising prospect of Europe's Islamization, and the continuing denial of its religio-cultural identity all work against the scenario favored by Ash. The last—the dissolution of the connection between European identity and Christianity—is perhaps the most debilitating, and the main source of Europe's other ills. Nonetheless, if the more dour expectations of Europe and its role in the world are vindicated, it should be remembered that at least one serious thinker did his best to propose a more hopeful alternative.

■ "Lights! Sound! Action! Gen Y and the Church of Choice" is an article by Paul Griffiths, professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago and a frequent contributor to FIRST THINGS. Writing in the *Boston College Magazine*, he notes that "Gen Y" is the current term of choice for those born "more or less between 1978 and 1991." Speaking with the authority possessed by the father of two Gen Y sons, he writes: "Generation Y swims in a powerful visual and aural environment like fish in a warm, salt sea. Public space is almost always saturated with background music; moments without conversation, one's own or someone else's, have become rarer (most of Generation Y does not recall a world without the cell phone); and when neither background music nor conversation are easily available, the personal music of the Discman or the iPod will at once be resorted to." Mother Theresa would, upon being introduced to people, give them what appeared to be a business card. Most thought it odd that Mother Theresa would have a business card, and she didn't. On the card was written: "The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love; the fruit of love is service; the fruit of service is peace."

■ The movie *Kinsey* takes us back half a century to the crucial role of Alfred Kinsey in launching a sexual revolution whose fall-out is still powerfully present. There is abundant reason to be sharply critical of Kinsey and his research. It is not necessary to exaggerate, as some conservative critics of the movie have done. I think columnist John Leo gets it about right: "Years ago, I covered the world of sex research as part of my social-science beat at *Time* magazine. I quickly figured out that a lot of people in this world seemed to have entered it because of their unusual sexual tastes, opinions, or problems. I think this was certainly true earlier of Kinsey as well. He was an exhibitionist, a voyeur, and a masochist. (This is handled in the movie by Kinsey's wife's discovering he has sliced his foreskin. But Kinsey did more grotesque things to his genitals than you want to read about here.) One biographer, James H. Jones, argues that Kinsey was gay from the beginning and riven with guilt about it, but he married and thought of himself as bisexual. The obvious question here is this: What are the odds that a researcher with this set of orientations and attitudes would be drawn to the conclusion that all sexual behavior is equal and that orgasms (and nothing else) count, certainly not how you achieve them or with whom? I would say the odds are very, very good. The movie stresses how relentlessly nonjudgmental Kinsey was. But as the late evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould once wrote, Kinsey's absence of judgment was itself a form of judgment. Kinsey wrote: 'What is right for one individual may be wrong for the next; and what is sin and abomination to one may be a worthwhile part of the next individual's life.' That certainly defined Kinsey's own sexual demons out of existence, but it left the field of sexology with a taboo-breaking, anything-goes legacy. It also left one huge open area that has stained sexology ever since: adult-child sex. Outraged critics of Kinsey often focus on Table 34 of the male book. It lists the sexual responses of children acquired from one of Kinsey's sources, a pedophile who kept detailed records of his child rapes, including those of a baby of five months and a four-year-old he sexually manipulated for twenty-four hours. As a nonjudgmental person, Kinsey of course did not bother turning the pedophile over to the law. His critics accuse Kinsey of 'Mengele medicine,' meaning that he presided over Nazi-like experiments. Not so. We have no evidence that Kinsey and his team conducted or approved of any child rapes. He just used the records of pedophiles, coldly described in the first Kinsey report as males who 'with their adult backgrounds are able to recognize and interpret the boys' experiences.' Table 34 was a moral horror, and neither Kinsey nor his patron, the Rockefeller Foundation, seemed to think that anything was amiss." As Leo notes, Kinsey did not explicitly endorse "intergenerational sex," but he did write that the damage to children who have sex with adults is attributable to society's horrified reaction. The advocates of adult-child sex have invoked his authority ever since. When he was writing about these things for *Time*, Leo says, "the air was thick with sex-world arguments in favor of incest and adult-child sex." Fortunately, that is less the case today, and the movie evades some of what might gently be called the more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

controversial aspects of Kinsey and his research. Unfortunately, the portrayal of Kinsey as a bold scientist defying the taboos of an ignorant society will probably seduce the gullible into buying his debased view of sexual desire and behavior in the "human animal." For those for whom their urges are their commands, it is an easy sell.

■ It was a festive dinner over at the Union League Club where we were giving Brian Lamb the annual History Award. On *Booknotes* and other C-Span programs he has for nearly twenty years run a national seminar on American history. In my few words I noted that my appearance on *Booknotes* to discuss *As I Lay Dying* had been scheduled originally for a week earlier, in which case it would have been episode number 666. That was a narrow escape. In his engagingly rambling remarks, Brian revealed that they received more orders for that tape than for any other program in the entire history of *Booknotes*. That was nice. He said it was because everybody knows they are going to die. I thought it was my telegenic charm and rapier-like wit. Maybe it was the combination of the dour and congenial. The dinner at the club was the week before Brian was taking *Booknotes* off the air. The final program the following Sunday evening was number 801, and the guest was a professor of English literature at a distinguished university, the University of Virginia I believe, who had just written a book on what it means to be an educated reader. Brian's genius as an interviewer, and it is genius, is in asking the right question and then stepping back to see what the guest does with it. Some people say he is laid back; I'd say he is incisively laconic. Brian never overtly agrees or disagrees with what is said, but sometimes there is the slightest smile of approval or twitch of the eyebrows indicating incredulity. Brian asked whether the professor was religious. No, he had been raised Catholic but at the age of twelve he had decided that none of that stuff could be scientifically proved and, anyway, it was too negative, so he chucked religion. He was not asked whether there was any other vast field of human inquiry, art, imagination, and literature about which the professor had definitively made up his mind at age twelve. What about, Brian asked, the complaint of liberal bias in the academy? That, said the professor reassuringly, was greatly exaggerated. He and his colleagues were open-minded, fair, compassionate, and interested only in respectfully trying to understand all viewpoints. Does he encounter resistance from students who are religious? Sometimes, he allowed, but they are often among the brightest, and he delights in liberating their repressed capacity to think for themselves. Many of them, he was pleased to report, end up being as wonderfully open-minded and caring as he is. The professor's big enthusiasms, not surprisingly, were Emerson and Walt Whitman, although he is also getting into Buddhist spirituality. During the program, Brian ran clips from past interviews with worthies such as Gertrude Himmelfarb, Paul Johnson, and Milton Friedman, and asked the professor what he thought about what they said. In one clip, Friedman was talking about Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. The professor said he had never read *The Road to Serfdom*. In fact, said he, he had never heard of *The Road to Serfdom*. This is a man who had written a book on what it means to be an educated reader. Longtime Lamb watchers witnessed a pronounced twitching of the eyebrows as the last episode of *Booknotes* came to a close. Brian Lamb, who is also the CEO of C-Span, will be doing other interview programs that will not require him to prepare by reading a scheduled new book every week. Now he can read what he wants. In my experience, and the experience of a multitude of others, he is the only interviewer who obviously read the books to be discussed. In fact, and despite the final interview with the English literature professor from, as I recall, the University of Virginia, *Booknotes* was the only intellectually serious interview program on television. It will be much missed. And I do not say that because I wanted to be invited again. *Booknotes* had an unbendable rule: nobody appeared more than once. Brian Lamb has the idea that the 801 programs might serve as a kind of audio-visual history of the wisdom and nonsense that was the intellectual life of America at the turn of the millennium. I expect he is right about that.

■ Quite suddenly, or so it seems to many, the prospect of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned or effectively nullified has entered mainstream discussion. This has everything to do, of course, with the November 2004 election and the filling of vacancies on the Supreme Court. James Taranto, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, takes a cool, some might say jaded, view of the possible political consequences: "Republicans are an extreme antiabortion party only in theory. When it comes to actual legislation, the GOP favors only modest—and popular—regulations. The Democrats, on the other hand, must defend such unpopular practices as partial-birth abortion, taxpayer-subsidized abortion, and abortions for thirteen-years-olds without their parents' knowledge. If the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*, legislators would have to consider the legality of abortion itself. Antiabortion absolutists would demand action from Republicans—but the GOP would be unable to comply without putting off moderate voters, who are much more numerous. Thus the battle would shift to terrain far more favorable to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Democrats. Congressional Republicans' smartest response would be to avoid the issue and leave it to the state legislatures. But this would free Democrats as well as Republicans to tailor their positions to match their constituents'. Abortion would likely remain legal in much of the country, and the Democratic Party would find it has nothing to fear from democracy." Returning abortion policy to the states might well be the best course of action available. But to say abortion "would likely remain legal in much of the country" is somewhat misleading. More probably, it would remain legal in certain circumstances; perhaps in the first month or two or in the much discussed but little encountered instances of rape, incest, and direct threat to the life of the mother. It is possible but by no means certain that any state would adopt the unlimited abortion license mandated by *Roe*. Some states would likely provide comprehensive legal protection for the unborn from conception on. There is another factor, however. Today no court can plausibly follow *Roe* in claiming that we do not know when a human life begins. Over these thirty-plus years, every literate person has learned, if they did not know before, the basic science about when a human life begins. Nor is it likely that in the future pro-abortionists will be able to use the *Dred Scott*-like argument about the meaning of "person" employed by *Roe*. Politically and judicially, the question will be posed in an unevadable manner as to why some who are undeniably human beings have a right to legal protection while others do not. Speculation such as that by Taranto will undoubtedly become more widespread. The debate over abortion may take surprising twists and turns as people seek a politically sustainable equilibrium on the single most potent question in our public life. Attention must be paid strategies and tactics and surprising turns, but those who understand what is at stake will never weary in working toward a society in which—if I may be permitted to say it for the thousandth time—every unborn child is protected in law and welcomed in life.

■ "Earth is hotting up, faster than ever before," says Hugh Montefiore, former Anglican bishop of Birmingham, England. Things promptly hotted up for the bishop as he was excommunicated from leading environmentalist circles of which he had been a prominent member. His unpardonable sin is that he came out for at least rethinking nuclear energy as a response to the fear of global warming. In these pages, Thomas Derr recently offered a judicious assessment of the talk about global warming, suggesting that much of it is hot air (FT November 2004). Montefiore, by contrast, is fully alarmed, and his alarm leads him to some revisionist thinking. "Four hundred forty-two reactors across the world produce 16 percent of the world's electricity. Modern nuclear reactors are of vastly improved design, approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The permissible dose for reactor operatives is far less than the natural radiation in Cornwall! Eighty percent of French electricity comes from nuclear energy." He takes on the objections one by one, including this: "Then there is the problem of nuclear waste. In Britain, short-lived and intermediate wastes are safely contained in trenches of glacial clay compacted, containerized, and capped with water-resistant clay. Long-lived wastes which last for thousands of years need more extensive treatment. The total amount of these since Britain began using nuclear energy is only the size of a ten-meter cube in volume. After cooling, the waste components need to be compacted into a vitrified solid, sealed in a metallic container, together with a metallic or ceramic 'overpack,' and placed in stable rock at least three hundred meters deep, together with a backfill to minimize any water movement. How safe is this? A former natural nuclear reactor has been found in Gabon which has remained undisturbed for thousands of years. There is minimal risk of danger to posterity. The advantages far outweigh any objections, and I can see no practical way of meeting the world's needs without nuclear energy. The predictions of the world's scientists are dire and the consequences for the planet are catastrophic. This is why I believe we must now consider nuclear energy. The subject is so important that it should be a matter of informed public debate." Among his former environmentalist allies, it would appear, informed public debate is precisely what is not wanted.

■ The theological differences that fall along denominational lines are not unimportant, says Nicholas Lash of Cambridge University, one of the more influential theologians of our time. But they are not the most important differences. "Perhaps the major fault line lies between those who call themselves Christians but nevertheless think that Christianity's a human construction, full stop, and those who don't. I think it's a divide that goes right down to the bottom—the issue is whether we are responding or constructing." For Lash, theology is definitely a matter of responding. "Although" he adds, "I would never begin an academic lecture with a prayer, because a lecture in a British university is not an act of worship, there is ultimately no separation. I would be horrified if I hadn't, even indirectly, taught my pupils to pray."

■ You know that the meaning of "postmodernism" has been definitively gutted when the Southern Baptist Convention adopts a "postmodern strategy" for evangelization. *Religion Watch* is a useful newsletter that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

patrols the latest things in American, mainly evangelical, religion. Evangelical "megachurches," which caused such excitement for a while, are so 1990s. The new thing is "emergence" and postmodernist communities that combine pop theories of evolution with New Age vocabulary and a strong dose of the "mystical," meaning candles, chants, streamlined Eastern meditation techniques, and a theology of the "upwardly open" nature of nature. Tossed in for good measure are "traditional practices, such as communion and other rituals." Evolutionary emergence involves everything from "sexual relationships and the Internet to larger and larger cooperative organizations and the global integration of mankind." These innovative spiritualities have their gurus, such as Ken Wilbur, who is known as the "Hegel of emergent holists." The ELCA Lutherans are getting in on the new thing with congregations that are postmodernist and postdenominational (denominations are so "modernist"). A Lutheran-sponsored Church of the Apostles in Seattle describes itself as "neither traditional (1950s) nor contemporary (1960s-1980s) but ancient-future." Well, that clarifies that then. Oh yes, the postmodernist community in Seattle has also discovered that "faith is not a set of beliefs but a way of life to be lived." Maybe, getting really ancient, they will discover the early twentieth-century slogan, "Deeds not creeds." As I say, *Religion Watch* is useful and the ephemeral excitements offered by the hustling of the American religious imagination are not without a certain interest. There are few things more traditionally American than the perpetual reinvention of Christianity. The other night a preacher on television said, "Study the Bible as if you were the first person in the world to read it." I don't know if it is true, but the story is told of a shipwreck from which crates of Bibles washed up on a remote South Sea island, where a lone English trader had taught the natives to read. Decades later the island was visited by other white folk who discovered that all the natives had become Seventh-day Adventists. Maybe that's the next really new thing.

■ A while back a trustee of Union Theological Seminary took issue in these pages with my saying that the institution has come upon hard times. It is, he suggested, entering its years of greatest glory and influence. I hope he is right, but here is a Union advertisement for Landmark Guest Rooms. "Comfortable guest rooms within the Seminary's walls blend the best of old and new. Our peaceful garden is an ideal spot for strolling, reading, and meditation. Union is just a short bus or cab ride away from all the excitement that New York City has to offer." Having sold its library to Columbia University, Union is now letting out rooms. It does sound like hard times.

■ Opus Dei plays a prominent part in the conspiracy theories propounded in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. Learning that a company is running Da Vinci tours, Opus Dei decided to make lemonade out of lemons and invited the company to bring its clients to Opus Dei houses where they received a PowerPoint lecture on the truth about Opus Dei. Apparently the arrangement is working out to everyone's satisfaction, although possibly not to Dan Brown's. *The Tablet* reports that some Catholics are deeply troubled by the book. "We understand that members of one parish book club who read it were so troubled they sought an explanation from a priest." They sought an explanation from a priest! You can hardly get more troubled than that.

■ The Episcopal Church has an Office of Women's Ministries, and its website recently posted *A Women's Eucharist: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine*. Apparently it is a Druid rite involving the adoration of women's water, menstrual blood, and breasts. Very edgy, as they say. The website also promotes books such as *The Book of the Goddess Past and Present, Goddesses Who Rule*, and *Beginner's Guide to Wicca*. Diane Knippers, herself an Episcopalian and head of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, is not pleased. She said, "It is bizarre to have to remind the Office of Women's Ministry that the Episcopal Church is a Christian church." There you have it, just as we were warned. Those crazy right-wingers are now trying to impose Christianity on the churches. What's next? Remember Martin Niemoeller's ominous warning, "First they came for the Druids, but I was not a Druid. . . ." You know how it turned out the last time.

■ Some governments that are one-party or one-person dictatorships do really bad things to their people, and to other people when they get the chance. Freedom House puts out a highly respected annual listing of free, partly free, and unfree nations. It may be, as we hear said, that freedom is on the march, but it has a very long way to go. Human rights awareness and human rights advocacy is urgently important, and the oldline American churches each have units assigned to that task. *Human Rights Advocacy in the Mainline Protestant Churches (2000-2003)* is a thirty-two-page study issued by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD). It examines official statements of the United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), and ELCA Lutherans, as well as the National and World Councils of Churches. During the years studied, there were 197 statements protesting human rights abuses. Sixty-nine percent of the protests were directed at Israel and the U.S. (37

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

percent and 32 percent, respectively). Only 19 percent were directed at countries Freedom House lists as unfree. Not one country bordering Israel is criticized. There were no criticisms of China, Libya, Syria, or North Korea. All of them brutally deny religious freedom, which one might think would be of particular interest to churches, and North Korea has concentration camps in which many thousands die after being worn out by slave labor. Never mind. The United States and Israel are the great violators of human rights in our time. And Israel is that, it would seem, because it is supported by the United States. As the authors of the report put it, "When U.S. policy cannot be blamed, the mainline denominations seem less interested in speaking up for the victims." Some victims are more politically interesting than others. Admittedly, the chronic anti-Americanism of the religious oldline is not big news. Some Jewish organizations see anti-Semitism in the hostility to Israel. The Presbyterians are supporting a program of disinvestment from Israel, along the lines of disinvestment from South Africa during the apartheid years. The Episcopal Church says it is thinking about joining up with the program. Anti-Semitism may have something to do with it, but anti-Americanism is the chief dynamic so ludicrously skewing the churches' perspective on human rights in the world. As Bernard Lewis has noted, criticism of Israel has the additional attraction of mitigating guilt feelings about the terrible things Christians have done to Jews over the centuries. "Yes, but," it is said, "look at the terrible things Jews are doing to Palestinians." It is true that Israeli retaliations against suicide bombings very deliberately aimed at killing Israeli civilians sometimes unintentionally kill Palestinian civilians. It is only the latter killings, however, that earn the censure of the oldline denominations. As I say, none of this is news. It seems probable that fewer and fewer people pay attention to what these churches say about human rights, or much of anything else. But their statements are invoked by organizations on the far left in this country, and are featured in anti-Israel propaganda in the Middle East. They ought also to be of some concern to the members of these churches.

■ Geoffrey Fisher was the first Archbishop of Canterbury to be received by the pope since the sixteenth-century unpleasantness. *The Tablet* reports that Michael Noakes, an artist who knew him, recalls that Fisher had "several photographs of the meeting displayed in his toilet—something the artist puts down to diffidence." As it happens, I also display photos of my meetings with dignitaries, including the pope, in my bathroom. It is nice to think that someone might put it down to diffidence. My idea is to give dinner guests a solitary moment in which to be impressed.

■ On Oxford University's Commemoration Day, Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, preached at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. "Don't be afraid," he said, "of assuming that your task is to equip people to take authority. In a democratic age, this is not the authority of a royal counselor or an imperial proconsul; it is the authority of the literate and educated person to contribute to public reason." He continued: "'The honor of kings is to search out a matter.' The royal dignity for which God has created human beings, the capacity to order their environment according to divine wisdom, is, at every level, something to do with shaping and guarding just and truthful speech, knowing how to question and to listen, reasonable conversation in the fullest sense. God shows his glory in the paradox that he hides within every created moment, every finite bit of the universe; when he hides in the cross of Jesus of Nazareth, the paradox is at its sharpest and the glory at its brightest. As human beings grow into their kingly dignity, they have also to go through the darkness and disorientation this paradox involves: the searching out of God in the cross, where faith is most deeply tested, is where the 'honor' of humanity is most firmly established, the glory of the image of God restored as our understanding is transformed by the Spirit of God. And the transformed understanding that the Spirit gives becomes the foundation of life in the Body of Christ, where our human awareness of each other is turned into trust and gratitude. Here is the common good as Christians experience and grasp it; this is what the Church—often clumsily and falteringly—holds up to the world in which it is set and the societies it seeks to transform. Among those societies is the society of intellectual life and practice, in its relation to the wider world. If it is the honor of rulers to search out truth and to resist the tyranny of the slogan and cliché, Christian faith offers a rationale for patience and generosity towards the intellectual community on the part of this wider society, because it is here that the tools of public life are formed, the skills to search out a shared truth. And the Church, committed as it is to the honor of human beings called by God into a royal priesthood, will continue—please God—its own rational conversation with the academy, probing its long view, the context of its labors for rationality. A university prepared to train its members for the service of the common good and to entertain the questioning of religious vision and commitment is one that remains worthy of its benefac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tors—and deserving still of public and private benevolence." Williams was no doubt aware that he stood in the pulpit from which John Henry Newman preached. I expect Newman would have approved.

■ Of course Thomas Cassidy of Fairfax, Virginia, is right. It was not Dublin but Cork City that in the 1950s elected Robert Briscoe, a Jew, as Lord Mayor, occasioning the observation, "Only in America."

■ I find myself in wholehearted agreement with an editorial in *America*, the Jesuit magazine. The editors call for "substantial, respectful intellectual exchange among Catholics." The problem, they say, is "petty name-calling, ad hominem arguments, and a 'gotcha' politics of denunciation." They lament "sophistic wars of opinion, indifferent to research and learning," as well as "righteous anger," "litmus-test correctness," and "the spouting of ill-founded certainties." I hereby join in the call for substantial, respectful intellectual exchange, and promise to do my best to eschew the dismissive and insulting language employed by the editors of *America* in describing those with whom they disagree.

■ "Orientalism" is the term popularized by the late Edward Said of Columbia University in describing the negative stereotypes of the East, and the Arab world in particular, cultivated by Western scholars. Now Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit have published *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, a detailed account of the "dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies," which reduces the West "to a mass of soulless, decadent, money-grubbing, rootless, faithless, unfeeling parasites." The language, one cannot help but notice, is that of classic anti-Semitic depictions of Jews. Jews and the State of Israel loom large also in a recent issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* with major articles on Christian mission to Muslims. Heather J. Sharkey, who teaches in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, notes the growth in recent decades of virulent Muslim resentment of any Christian presence in dominantly Muslim countries, very much including the Christian educational, medical, and social welfare institutions that flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, Muslim hostility has become more overt toward those Middle Eastern Christians who have been in that part of the world since the beginning of the Christian movement. Against Egyptian Copts, for instance, it is charged "that they had become arrogant and had forgotten their proper place as *dhimmis*—tolerated, protected, but socially subordinate peoples living at the sufferance of Islamic states." Christians have never made great missionary gains with Muslims, not least because Islam prescribes severe penalties, such as death, for those who convert. But the intensity of anti-missionary and anti-Christian passions today, says Sharkey, has to be understood against the background of a new Islamism that successfully exploits the sense of exploitation and inferiority produced by colonialism and subsequent decades in which history seemed to pass Islam by. Of Islamic polemicists she writes, "The anti-Christian sentiment of these writers was an outgrowth of their anti-Westernism." Westernism in the Muslim mind, however, is never dissociated from Christianity and "the Crusaders," along with, as these polemicists would have it, their confederates, the Jews, who have again seized what belongs to Islam. In the same issue of the *Bulletin*, Colin Chapman of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut asks whether it is time to "give up the idea of Christian mission to Muslims." He finally answers with a definite No, but does so after a dispiriting review of reasons to answer Yes. In contrast to Sharkey, he writes, "Western involvement in the Muslim world over the last two hundred years has led to distinct improvements in the status of Christians in Islamic societies, and no country practices the *dhimmi* system any longer." One thinks of, to cite but one obvious contrary instance, Saudi Arabia, where the wearing of a cross, the possession of a Bible, or the holding of a prayer service is forbidden and harshly punished. Chapman persuasively argues that there is no necessary conflict between evangelization and dialogue with Muslims; indeed, Muslims see no point in dialogue with Christians who do not want to share the truth they believe is theirs. Above all, Christians cannot betray the missionary mandate of their Lord, and Chapman holds out the hope that Muslims can have a saving encounter with Christ while remaining Muslims. Something similar happens, it seems, to Hebrew Christians who understand themselves to be fulfilled Jews in their commitment to Christ. Christian missionaries in the Middle East have been killed in recent years, and others must be prepared to be martyrs, he says. "But," he adds, "they do so now with a keen awareness of the ambiguities of the situation: in one sense some will certainly be martyrs; but from another point of view they will simply be victims of their own governments' policies." Those policies, in his view, have to do chiefly with the collusion between the U.S. and the Zionists. There is a tone of sadness and even nostalgia in these reflections on the Christian mission to the Muslims. In my Lutheran boyhood we received at our house a publication, *The Minaret*, which depicted that mission in a way that uncomplicatedly assumed its legitimacy and eventual success, along with all the other efforts to "bring Christ to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nations." In this era of the lethal clashing of civilizations, that sense of confidence is much reduced. And yet, as these reflections in the *International Bulletin* remind us, the duty to act upon the missionary mandate, however complicated and delayed, cannot be denied. But it will be ever so much more difficult in a time when a mainly benign Orientalism is giving way to an undisguisedly hateful Occidentalism.

■ Beethoven, writes Algis Valiunas in the *Claremont Review of Books*, is "an icon of democratic nobility." The democratic vistas opened to view in the Ninth Symphony, and especially the "Ode to Joy," continue to exhilarate, but the view is magnificently flawed, says Valiunas. "Beethoven's basic conception of the Ninth, at once political and religious, is vitiated by wishful thinking, which is to say false prophecy. Beethoven failed to recognize that egalitarianism taken to its extreme would establish not generous fraternal understanding but universal self-regard and contempt for all distinctions of quality. And those afford no basis for the soul's ecstatic wanderings in the direction of heaven. Perhaps Beethoven misconstrued the necessary order of theological and political understanding: it might just be that men have to know the divine love before they can appreciate in what sense they are all brothers. And if that is the case, we might all be better off listening to Bach." The late string quartets and piano sonatas, the Hammerklavier, and, most particularly, Opus 109, are closer to the truth, writes Valiunas. "Having traveled in mind where only the rarest of men have gone, at least so far, Beethoven returns to the world familiar to all. This sonata shows what it is to be broken by the world and decide to go on nonetheless, with the gentlest soul. The most heroic fortitude is not the steel-edged relentlessness of the man who vows to take Fate by the throat; it is rather the infinite tenderness of the indomitable sufferer who realizes that there were times when all might have been lost, and who somehow made it through all the same. Beethoven here offers himself as the man of sorrows—strictly lower-case, stripped of any godly aspirations—who wants all to touch his inmost heart and to draw needed strength from that knowledge. The third movement exposes his very soul, one man addressing all men, in the simplest utterance of simplest feeling: when an extraordinary man has passed through the fires, this stark radiance is what remains." Returning to a comparison with the Ninth, Valiunas writes: "Modern audiences clearly feel the need to revel in that exultation, even though democracy has failed to deliver on the promised earthly and intergalactic glories. Yet the celebrated exhilaration of the Ninth, which professes to take in all Creation, is sadly missing something. That towering monument does not surpass in moral beauty the humble chapel that is Opus 109, constructed on a human scale. That sonata shows the highest rank of democratic nobility to be unassuming and unabashed, defenseless and pure in the sight of all men and their Creator. The fullest, the noblest humanity we have known so far sounds exactly like this." Democratic nobility as a humble chapel. That is music criticism—and political thought—of a high order.

■ Some meetings of ROFTERS (Readers of FIRST THINGS) gather in the parish hall, others in homes over a potluck dinner, yet others at restaurants, and at least one at the local library. Groups usually meet once a month and take up, in various ways, what is in the current issue. Each group is independent and determines what structure, or absence of structure, works best. To find a ROFTERS group near you, check out the website, *www.firstthings.com*. If you are interested in launching a group, write Erik Ross at *er@firstthings.com*.

Sources: Methodists, Bush, and repentance, *Christian Century*, November 16, 2004. Christiansen on just war, *America*, November 15, 2004. *La Civiltà Cattolica* on Islamic terrorism, from the website *www.chiesa.espressonline.it*, October 7, 2004. Dula on the war, *Commonweal*, December 3, 2004. The Germans on their war, *New York Sun*, December 8, 2004. James on infidelity, *New York Times*, December 8, 2004. Edgar on the election, "Best of The Web Today," *www.OpinionJournal.com*, November 10, 2004. How Jesus would vote, *Christianity Today*, November 2004. Griffiths on Gen Y, *Boston College Magazine*, Fall 2004. Leo on Kinsey, *www.townhall.com*, November 15, 2004. Taranto on *Roe*, *Wall Street Journal*, December 7, 2004. Anglican bishop goes nuclear, *Tablet*, October 23, 2004. Lash on theology and prayer, *Tablet*, October 23, 2004. Postmodern Baptists, *Religion Watch*, November 2004. Episcopalian Druids, Institute on Religion and Democracy press release, November 11, 2004. *America* on respectful exchange, October 18, 2004. Occidentalism and the missionary mandate, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 2004. Valiunas on Beethoven, *Claremont Review of Books*, Fall 2004.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SLOVAK SEMINAR ON THE FREE SOCIETY

Fourth Annual Summer Institute
in Bratislava & Spisska Kapitula
in the Slovak Republic

June 23-July 2, 2005

EXPLORE the three systems of a free society—political, economic and moral-cultural—in the social thought of Pope John Paul II, *The Federalist Papers*, Tocqueville and others. Our text will be *A Free Society Reader* (Lexington Books, 2000). Our faculty will include:

Michael Novak *Robert Royal*

Fr. Derek Cross

And Lecturers from Slovak Universities, Media, and Government

Fellowships available for 10 Slovak students and 5 American students. To apply send a brief statement of your own (two hundred words) on the nature of liberty, a longer writing sample, *curriculum vitae*, and a short cover letter explaining your interest in attending:

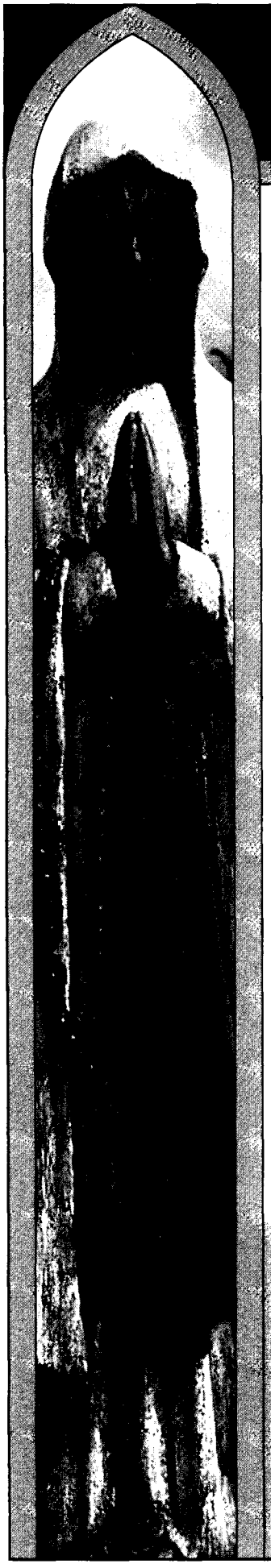
Christopher Levenick
American Enterprise Institute
1150 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
fax: 202-862-5821
clevenick@aei.org

The deadline for applications is April 1, 2005. Fellowships include tuition, lodging, meals, and excursions. Students are responsible for their own travel costs and pocket money.

Classes are in Bratislava, June 23-28, and in Spisska Kapitula, June 28-July 2. Return by bus to Bratislava July 2. Brief excursions have been arranged.

Go to our website at www.freesociety.sk.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Master's and Doctoral Degrees in Theology

FROM AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

Fr. Joseph Fessio, S.J., and Fr. Matthew L. Lamb are pleased to announce comprehensive, selective Ph.D. and M.A. programs devoted to genuine integrations of wisdom and scholarship, of worship and science.

Fidelity to the truth of the Catholic faith and Magisterium demands intellectual, moral, and religious excellence of the highest order to unfold the beauty and intelligibility of that truth.

These programs develop the linguistic skills as well as the philosophical and theological habits of mind and heart needed in the study of the great theological masters of the past two millennia.

Doctoral concentrations in systematic and moral theology, including the possibility of third-year study abroad with leading scholars.

In colloquia and regular conferences learn from world-renowned scholars and Church leaders.

Students are immersed in a contemplative pattern of study in accord with the best traditions of theological study as a speculative intellectual discipline rooted in a life of prayer.

Full tuition scholarships, stipends, and/or graduate assistantships available to high-achieving applicants, including five-year scholarships with full tuition and generous stipends for doctoral students

Students now being accepted for Fall 2005

For more information contact:

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
1025 Commons Circle
Naples, Florida 34119
239-280-1629
Email: graduatetheology@avemaria.edu
Website: www.naples.avemaria.edu

EX CORDE ECCLESIAE
AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED